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Athlete of the
Ancient World**

**History's Most
Hair-Raising
Sports!**

ANCIENT SPORTS

OLYMPIC ISSUE

plus The Cwezi: An Ancient Race of African Demigods

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SPOTLIGHT: ANCIENT SPORTS

WE LOVE SPORTS!

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will include five new sports - baseball/softball, karate, sport climbing, skateboarding, and surfing. This is one of the ways these Olympics are unique, but this event also differs from others in striking ways due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

For one thing, the Olympics were postponed for a year. Another difference from past events is that fans won't be there to cheer on their favorite athletes. Tens of thousands of athletes, support staff, and journalists are expected to attend, but spectators have been banned from the venues. While debate continues on whether sports broadcasters will try to incorporate artificial crowd noise into the games, it makes me consider the role of spectators at the Olympic Games of the past.

The ancient Olympics also knew how to draw in crowds of men (women weren't allowed). The stadium of Olympia could contain about 45,000 spectators and that in Nemea about 40,000. If they had the means, men would travel from far and wide to watch their favorite runners, boxers, wrestlers, horse racers, and javelin throwers. But the audiences didn't just attend because they loved sports, they also knew that the Games were a good place to network.

In-between events, merchants, fortune-tellers, jugglers, and many others conducted business. Even philosophers and writers, like the historian Herodotus, sought out the large audiences with hopes of gaining fame. Politicians of course saw the occasion as a good

opportunity for political propaganda.

While spectators were undoubtedly important ever since the ancient Games, most people would agree the value of sports is more than just the number of fans cheering on athletes. Although some sports stars, such as the charioteer Gaius Appuleius Diocles, who you'll learn about in this issue, were out for fame, many athletes are spurred on by their love of the sport more than their adoring fans and money.

In this issue we explore the origins and passion people hold for popular sports such as football, golf, and boxing all around the world. But we also cover some terrifying sports you may be less familiar with, such as *buzkashi*, described as "blood-drenched polo, with a headless goat as the ball." A less intense, but equally surprising sport you'll learn about is lava sledding in Hawaii – we have an exclusive interview with the man behind this ancient sport's comeback.

Remember how I mentioned that women couldn't attend the ancient Olympics where men competed? They had their own! This issue guides you through the fascinating story of the Heraean Games, one of history's best kept secrets.

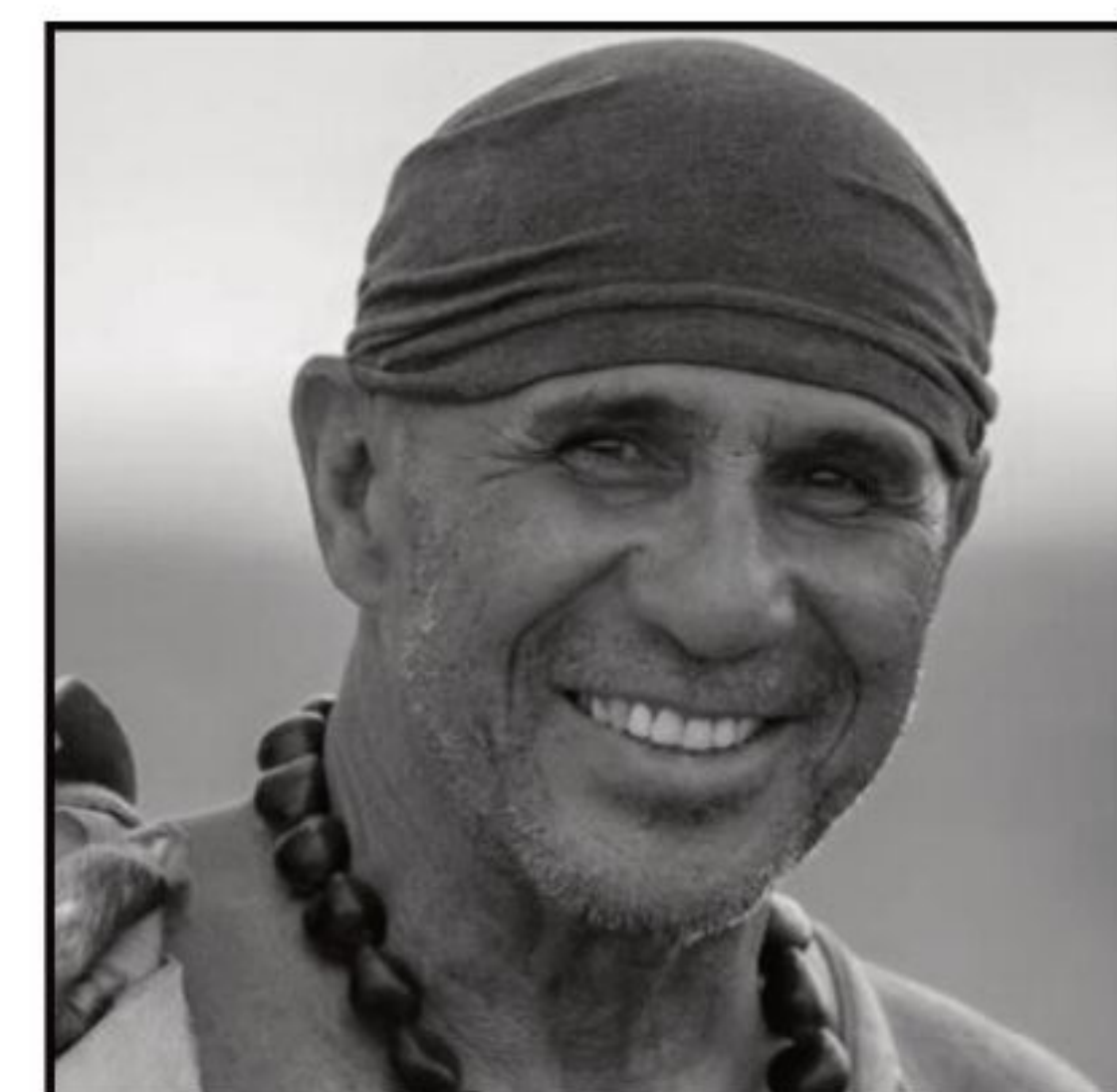
Speaking of secrets and mysteries, we also cover the legends surrounding the Cwezi – were they African demigods or possibly visitors from another planet?



ALICIA MCDERMOTT

Chief Editor, Ancient Origins Magazine

EXPERTS IN THIS ISSUE...



TOM "POHAKU" STONE

Tom "Pohaku" Stone is an educator, traditional surfboard shaper, and former pro surfer. He's reviving lost aspects of Hawaiian culture, like the art of crafting *papahe'enalu* (surfboards) and *he'e holua* (mountain surfing).

HISTORY

We inherit it, we make it,
and we are destined to
become part of it



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By Micki Pistorius

Medieval Dead Did Not Rest In Peace



Archaeologists were mystified by evidence of early Medieval graves being reopened shortly after burial all over Europe, but the presence of some precious jewelry and artifacts ruled out the assumption of grave robbery for maximum returns. Dr. Alison Klevnäs from Stockholm University explained that when archaeologists from France, the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany pooled their data, some interesting mortuary rituals emerged. It seems second or third generation relatives would reopen their ancestors' graves to remove certain objects such as swords and daggers, but not other weapons or shields; and some brooches, but not gold and silver necklaces with precious metal pendants. Perhaps grandsons and granddaughters thought it would be a waste to allow a great-grandparent to hold on to a family heirloom such as a good sword or beautiful brooch, which may have had more practical value to the living than to the dead. Corpses were often rearranged, perhaps to make the ancestor more comfortable and appease for the missing item, but the exact reason for the removal of certain items is yet to be uncovered.

Grave from France where the individual was moved around. The reopening of graves to move bodies or remove artifacts was a widespread Medieval practice.

The Missing Link Hiding in the Levant

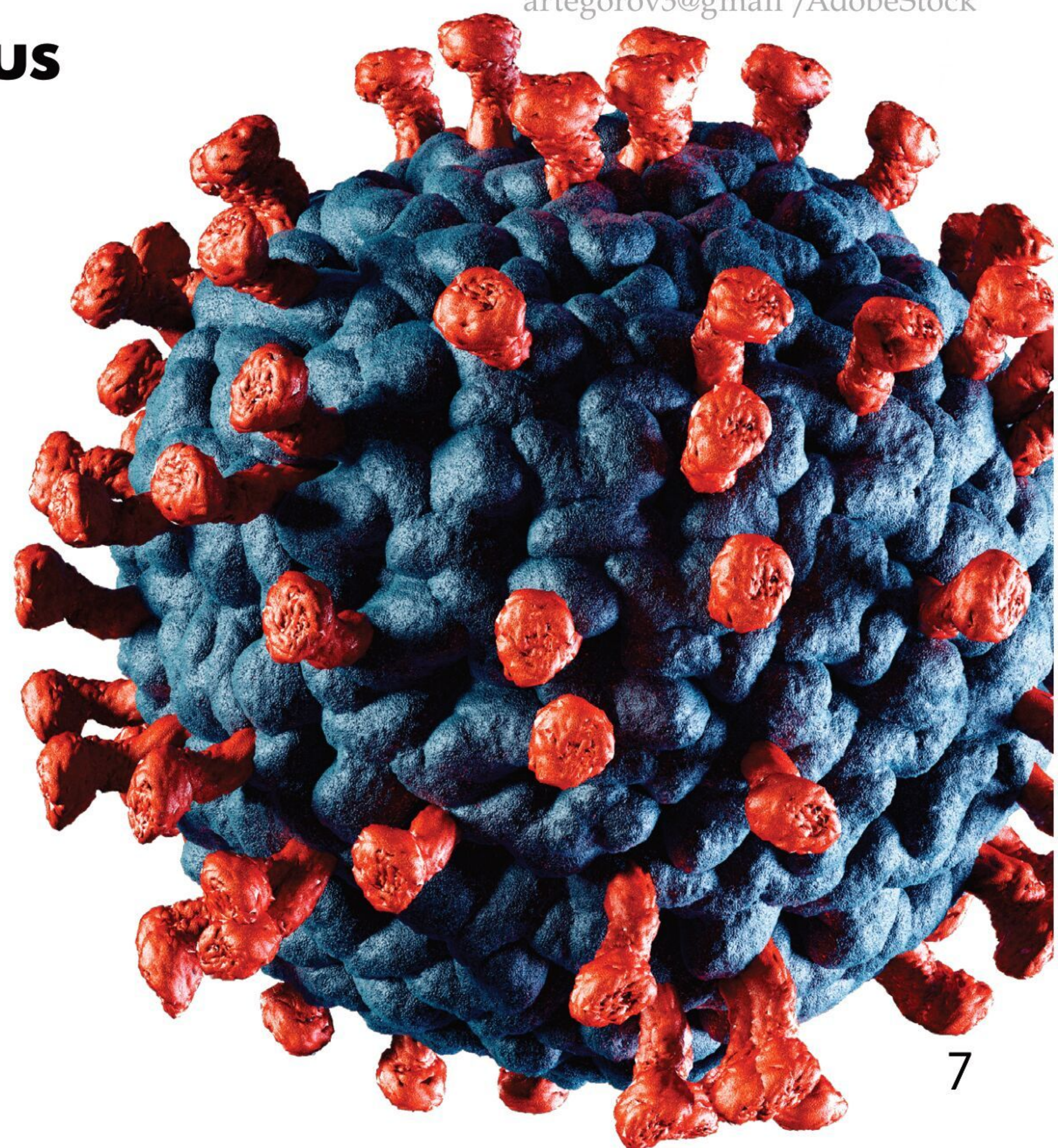


Nesher Ramla Homo fossils - reconstruction of their location in the head.

Recent excavations at Nesher Ramla in Israel just revealed a new kind of Homo species which lived side by side with *Homo sapiens* more than 120,000 years ago. According to Dr. Yossi Zaidner, heading the archaeology team from the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the morphology of the Nesher Ramla Homo shares features with both Neanderthals (teeth and jaws) and *Homo sapiens* (the skull), but is very distinct from modern humans. The discovery turns the existing theory that Neanderthals migrated from Europe to the Levant 870,000 years ago topsy-turvy. According to Professor Israel Hershkovitz, heading the anthropology team, the Nesher Ramla fossils suggest that the ancestors of European Neanderthals lived in the Levant as early as 400,000 years ago, repeatedly migrating westward to Europe and eastward to Asia, not the other way around. The Levant becomes a starting point of cultural confluence and migration into the Old World.

20,000-Year-Old Coronavirus Traced to Ancient Asia

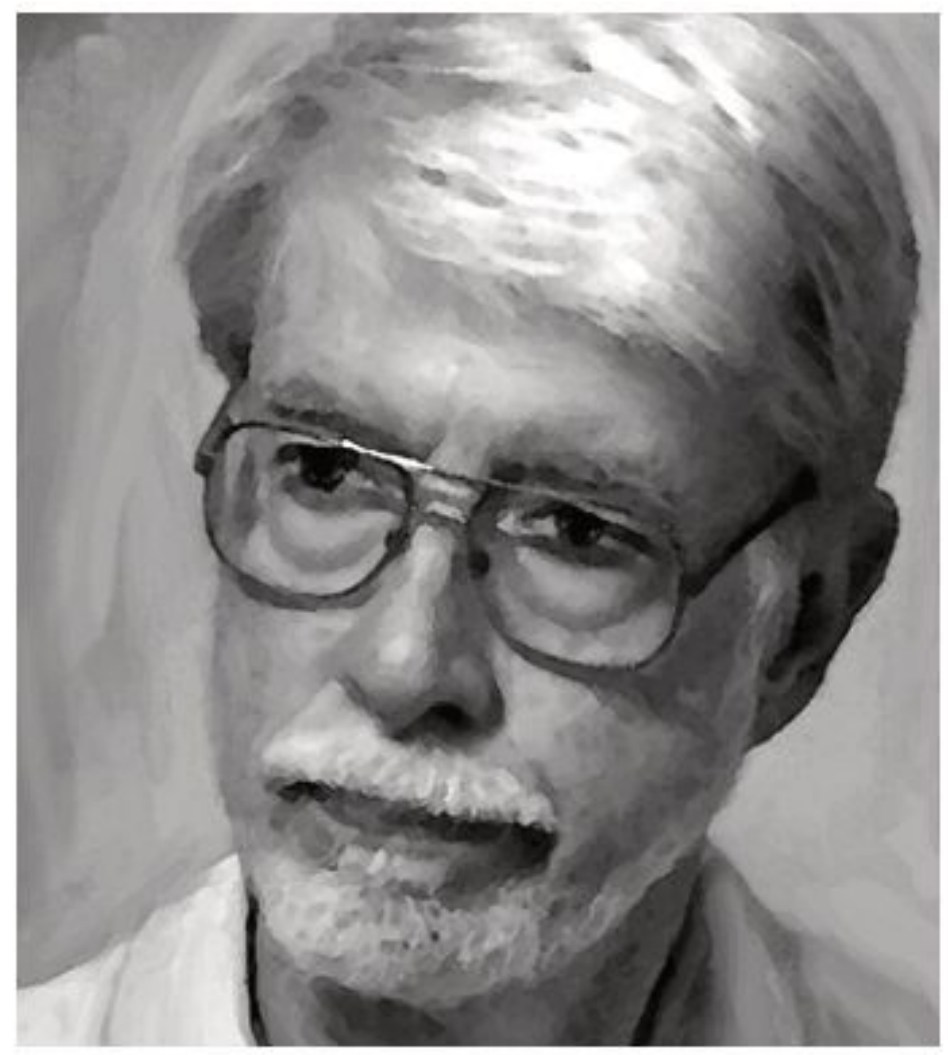
A study of 2,500 modern humans from 26 worldwide populations reveal that an ancient coronavirus outbreak struck East Asia some 20,000 years ago. Interestingly the genes among the DNA of a selection of a population of East Asian ancestry were found to be better adapted to respond to the “new” (2019) coronavirus and its variants, giving rise to the theory that an ancient coronavirus pandemic left traces in the genetic makeup of this population. Dr. Yassine Souilmi, from the University of Adelaide's School of Biological Sciences and co-author Professor Kirill Alexandrov from CSIRO-QUT Synthetic Biology Alliance and QUT's Centre for Genomics and Personalized Health, hope that old viruses, like the ancient coronavirus evidence found in the recent study, can help modern humans better understand genome sequences and DNA responses in relation to how they adapted or changed in response to past viruses.



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ORIGINS RISING

J. DOUGLAS
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For a quarter century,
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was editor and
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Rising Magazine. For
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Newly discovered satellite imagery of western India has revealed what are said to be the “largest images ever made by human hands.” Enormous patterns that can be seen only from high altitude appear in the Thar desert, also known as the Great Indian

Desert. And, like the famous lines on the plain of Nazca in Peru, the newfound geoglyphs near the village of Boha are made of complicated animal shapes spread over one million square feet and spiraling, in one case, for over seven miles.

Researchers Carlo and Yohann Oetheimer, father and son, published a detailed new survey in May on the web site ScienceDirect.com, but they refused to speculate on who made the geoglyphs, or why, or when. Those questions will have to await further study, but proximity to remnants of the lost Harappan, or Indus Valley civilization, is inviting questions. The geoglyph discovery comes on the heels of another new study documenting that where now there is only barren wasteland, a river once flowed, thus undergirding the once controversial notion that the mighty Sarasvati River described in ancient Vedic scriptures such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, could be more than myth.

According to the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, new luminescence dating of river



Gulf of Cambay. Credit: NASA Johnson.

sediments shows that as far back as 173,000 years ago there was significant river activity in the center of the Thar desert.

In my new book, *Ghosts of Atlantis*, I consider evidence for an advanced, but lost, civilization in the region. Investigation of such a possibility was widely reported in 2006 and earlier. The chief geologist with India’s National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), *Badrinaryan Badrinaryan*, concluded at the time that tell-tale ruins had been found in the Gulf of Cambay (Gulf of Khambhat) off India’s west coast and downstream of whatever river might once have flowed through the Thar, and named ‘Sarasvati’ in Vedic texts.

The discovery of a previously unknown society was described at the time as the oldest ever found, and indeed as ‘pre-diluvian,’ a

term that refers to the era pre-dating the flooding (deluge) which accompanied the end of the last ice age (aka, The Younger Dryas) about 12,500 years ago, and aligning with Plato’s date for the sinking of Atlantis. Badrinaryan’s report stated firmly that the evidence clearly shows that, from about 13,000 to 3,000 years ago, a civilization flourished in the Cambay area, and that there is strong evidence that human habitation there could go back as far as 31,000 years. Badrinaryan, went on to say that he believed this was, in fact, the progenitor of the mysterious Harappan civilization, once believed to be, one of— if not the oldest—in the world.

“Vedic literature is clear on Sarasvati River geography,” claimed Indologist David Frawley in a 2017 interview with

Streams in the Desert

correspondent Cynthia Logan, for *Atlantis Rising Magazine*. Lauded as the main river in the *Rig Veda*, the Saraswati was said to be wide and vast in size, and 'pure in course from the mountains to the sea.' Indeed, the Saraswati was, according to recent studies, one of the largest, if not the largest river in India before drying up in the desert in 2000 BC. In ancient times, it drained the Sutlej and Yamuna, whose courses were much different than today. Later Vedic texts, including the *Mahabharata*, mention that the Saraswati dried up and no longer reached the sea.

Writing in the *journal Nature* (May 2016), researchers from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) support Frawley's opinion, citing pottery shards found in the Mohenjo-daro/Harappa area, near where the Saraswati River would have been. Dates obtained from state-of-the-art, optically stimulated luminescence technology show they were created around 7,000 BC, indicating the Saraswati civilization was older by at least 2,500 years than conventional scholars date the pyramids of Egypt or the megaliths of Stonehenge.

Well informed scholars throughout the world have long recognized the achievements of ancient India. Often millennia ahead of western counterparts, the numerous Vedic contributions to science include the concept of Zero, the decimal system, binary numbers, atomic



Painting of the Goddess Saraswati by Raja Ravi Varma.

theory, heliocentric astronomy, plastic surgery, cataract surgery, and more. Yet, since the 18th century, Eurocentric historians have attempted to account for India's many mysterious achievements with a hypothetical 'Aryan' invasion from the west, even though no real evidence for such a thing has ever been found.

Curiously, there may be other ways to obtain reliable dates from ancient records. American Vedic

scholar Nilesh Oak says we can date accounts like those in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* through specific references made in the text to the positioning of planets, moon, and stars at key moments. There are hundreds of such detailed mentions, and Oak says that, at a minimum, they can be used to accurately date the great war described in the *Mahabharata* (aka, the Kurukshetra War) to a paradigm-busting 5561 BC.



FABULOUS CREATURES



Charles Christian is a barrister and Reuters correspondent turned writer, award-winning tech journalist, radio presenter, podcaster, blogger, storyteller, and sometime werewolf-hunter who presents a weekly podcast: the Weird Tales Radio Show

CHARLES CHRISTIAN

With the Olympic Games due to take place in Tokyo this summer, for this edition's creature feature I thought I would take a brief look at the dragon, a fabulous beast that features heavily in Japanese folklore and legend...

Let us start at the beginning: you find legends of dragons and dragon-like cultures among almost every culture on the planet – but where did they originate? There are two popular suggestions and the truth is probably a mixture of the two.

The first is they stemmed from tales of encounters with real creatures but became mangled and exaggerated with retelling, a bit like angler's tales of the fish they almost caught. Imagine you are in the city of Constantinople in the year 800 AD and a traveler is telling you a tale of an encounter with a crocodile – or in Kyoto (the former capital of Japan) in that same year listening to tales of the Komodo Dragon, a real life beast with a venomous bite. You'd be in little doubt these were encounters with dragons.

Combine this with the second factor: the discovery of dinosaur

DRAGONS

CAN YOU TRAIN THEM ANYWAY?

bones, mammoth bones, and the partially decomposed remains of whales washed up on the shore (to this day whale remains are still being misinterpreted as sea monsters), and once more you would believe they were the remains of dragons.

Given the global appeal of dragons, it is hardly surprising that different cultures have depicted them in different ways over the years. For instance, the European version tends to be a flying, fire-breathing or venom-spewing dinosaur, whereas the Japanese dragon is more of a water deity, usually depicted as a large, wingless, serpentine creature with clawed feet. It is also generally reckoned the Japanese dragon was historically heavily influenced by Chinese dragons, and indeed contain features imported from Chinese, Korean, and Indian dragon legends.

But there are differences. For example Japanese dragons are almost always shown with three claws on each foot, whereas in Korea they have four claws, and in China the imperial dragon has five claws. Also, there are differences in behavior: Chinese dragons are generally benevolent, bringing the rains that are needed for agriculture, whereas Japanese dragons are more malevolent and prone, like their European counterparts, to snacking on innocent maidens – at least until some hero comes along to slay them.

But to get back to the question I posed at the outset in the title: can



you actually train a dragon? Fantasy novels and movies frequently feature reluctant heroes who discover they have magical powers that allow them to charm and subdue dragons. Folklore however tells a different story.

In the best known example, *The Golden Legend* telling of St George and the Dragon, St George arrives to save a virgin princess who has been offered as a sacrifice to the dragon. St George wounds the dragon with his spear then asks to borrow the princess's 'girdle' (not a piece of underwear but a belt worn on the outside of a dress) which he then places around the dragon's neck. The dragon then follows the princess like a "meek beast" (or the "tamest dog" depending on the translation) on a leash. Problem solved: if you plan to go dragon-hunting this summer, ensure you are accompanied by a belt-wearing virgin maiden! ■

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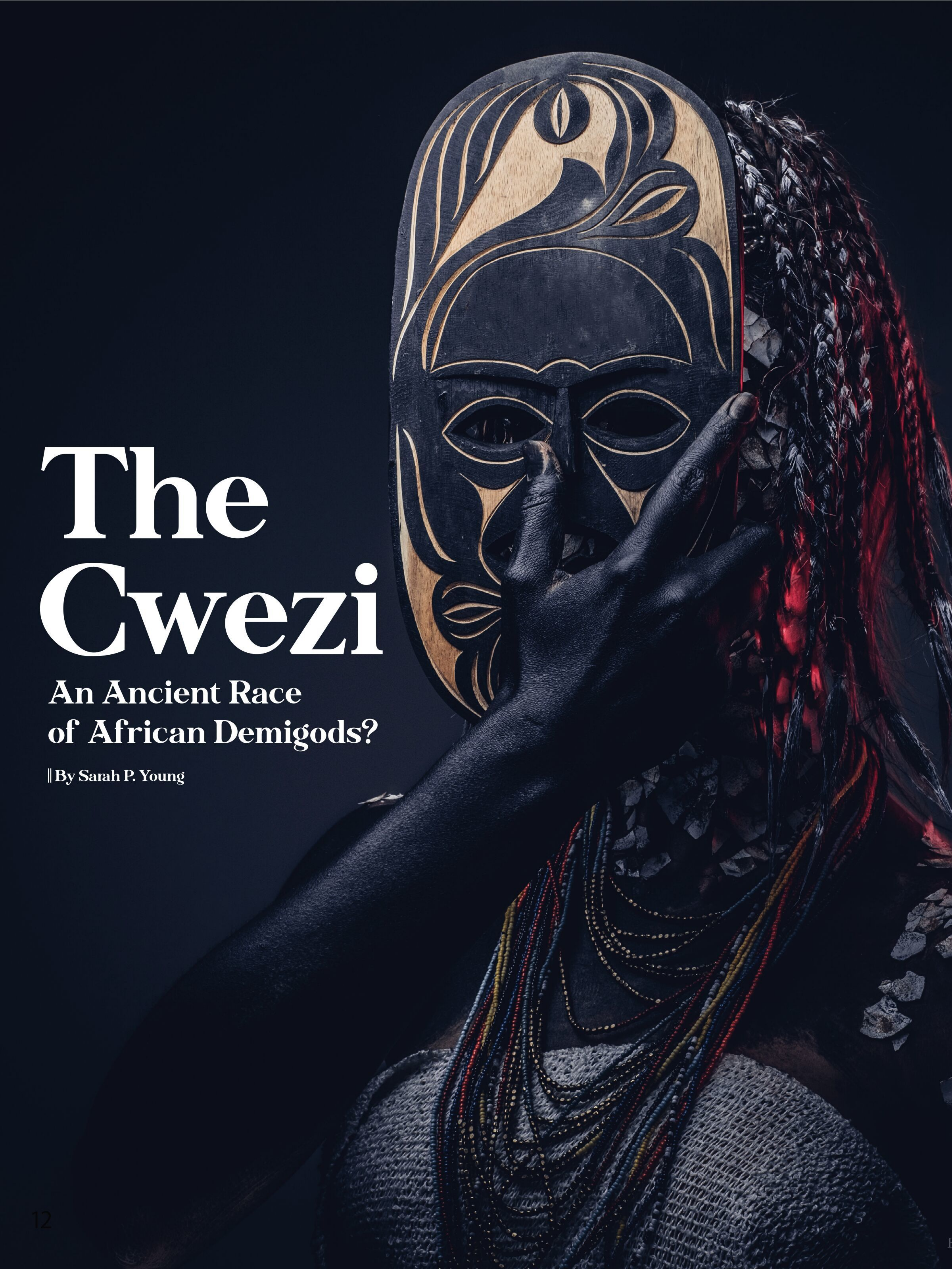
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The Cwezi

An Ancient Race
of African Demigods?

|| By Sarah P. Young





The Bachwezi people, who are also known as the ancient Cwezi, were a group of people who legends say ruled the Empire of Kitara (Empire of the Sun), which encompassed a vast area including modern day Uganda, Sudan, northern Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, and Malawi from 10,000 BC to 1500 AD. The empire began to fragment into various autonomous states in the 1300s, as a result of people believing in a prophecy that stated the death of a sacred cow, Bihogo, would mark the end of the empire.

The Cwezi were an extraordinary people for several reasons. They had a number of distinctive physical features; they were unusually tall, and their heads were a distinctly “unhuman” shape. This has resulted in some people attributing their unusual appearance to evidence that they were demigods. Others have argued they were a race of ancient extraterrestrials. In addition to their physical appearance, they are said to have had supernatural skills, beyond any human abilities.

They were even worshiped by the Ugandans, who called on them to intervene in times of crisis. The Rwandans and Burundi people, who still worship the Cwezi, call them *Ibimanuka*, which means ‘people who landed as gods’. They are worshipped by tribes in Ankole, Toro, East Congo, Buganda, and Tanzania. With so many people still convinced they were supernatural or extraterrestrial beings, could there be any truth to the claims they had some special abilities?

POTENTIAL ORIGINS AND DESCENDANTS OF THE CWEZI

The most commonly cited source of information about the Cwezi that remains is the oral tradition of the Tutsi, an ethnic group in the African Great Lakes region - though their origins are still a hotly contested subject. While some people believe they came from Egypt, the Tutsi describe the mystical ancient Cwezi as the direct ancestors of the Kush, Nubian, and Khamitian royalty. They have also been described as relatives of, or the same cultural group as the Khamitic and Sudanic gods. Today, there is much more reliance on physical evidence to prove the existence and behaviors of ancient cultures. The presence of ancient relics is used to try and ascertain the presence and potential origins of this mysterious and controversial ancient race.

Many modern scholars believe the Cwezi first arrived in Western Uganda around 500 AD. They migrated from north of the Nile River and brought with them more organized social structures and established kingdoms in eastern Africa. Gakondo, an eccentric and rather controversial African writer, believes this theory is incorrect and feels strongly that it was conceived of during the colonial era at a time where Western influence was prevalent in the region.

He offers an alternative version of events – that the Cwezi people were not restricted to the regions around Lake George and Lake Albert as Western scholars have argued, but were actually the rulers of the ancient Kitara Empire which spanned a vast region covering

modern day Rwanda, Burundi, Karagwe, Eastern Congo, some parts of Uganda, and the Kano plains of Kenya. He goes even further, arguing the Cwezi are the ancestors of a vast number of modern African kingdoms – Toro, Ankole, Buganda, Rwanda, and

The Cwezi are universally described as extraordinary

Burundi – and even some lost kingdoms like the Kongo and Zanj.

The geographical origins and spread of the Cwezi people are already a

contested subject, but the argument is complicated further by the fact that they are not like other known ancient cultures. The Cwezi are universally described as extraordinary in both appearance and behavior, which has led to speculation that they were visitors from another planet with 'one foot on earth and another foot astral'.

Others believe their unusual traits are because they were a race of half humans and half gods. Traditional descriptions of the Cwezi are of a race who were remarkably tall, with dark brown skin (with the notable exception of one folktale recounted by C.C Wrigley which describes them as white.) This does not sound too exceptional for a race in Africa, but these physical descriptions are coupled with tales of their supernatural abilities, including the ability to teleport and the power of telekinesis.



An antique African mask.

EVIDENCE OF CWEZI SUPERPOWERS

One of the things that has been cited as evidence the Cwezi possessed superhuman abilities is the construction of the pyramids. They were constructed from 30-ton blocks of rock, which were transported a tremendous distance from their territory in South Sudan to Cairo. More traditional explanations for this are the use of slave labor (either by Israelite captives or locals) or a workforce of thousands. But proponents of the theory that the Cwezi were supernatural beings believe the

blocks were not dragged to their location over hundreds of miles by men, but moved into place telekinetically.

They also believe the blocks were not quarried and then chiseled with basic tools, but were easily cut into their precise shapes using some kind of advanced or magic technology available to the Cwezi that is no longer known.

If this theory is true, it may be evidence that the theory the Cwezi originated in Egypt is probable.

Gakondo, the African writer who is a staunch believer that the Cwezi were supernatural, believes more traditional theories about the construction of the pyramids are the result of bias. He argues that the archaeologists who believe the pyramids were made with primitive tools are simply unwilling to think of ancient people as intelligent or advanced technologically. He believes they attribute the extraordinary feat to manual labor because it validates their idea that earlier civilizations were primitive.

Legends all claim
the Cwezi were
able to see into
the future.



If this was not enough potential evidence that the Cwezi were supernatural, oral legends also claim they possessed the powers of clairvoyance, telepathy, and at least some ability to teleport. These powers meant they were able to read thoughts, but perhaps more significantly the legends all claim the Cwezi were able to see into the future. This meant the Cwezi could not only see any potential dangers but also alert one another. They were able to teleport in an instant if they needed to move out of harm's way, or to travel long distances to avoid or resolve conflict.

LONG REACHING INFLUENCES

The issue of Cwezi teleportation is also a potential explanation for the existence of similar people in the folktales of cultures across the continent – from the Yoruba

people in Western Africa to the San in the Kalahari or the Mali in southern Africa. If the Cwezi were able to teleport, they could easily have been known across a wide area and their sudden appearances and extraordinary skills would not have gone unnoticed.

Along with teleportation, many folk tales describe the Cwezi as traveling through the air by levitating. They are said to have passed

on the knowledge of this mystical skill and the Gisaka people in Rwanda and Karagwe claim to have held and used this secret skill until as recently as the 1980s. They say the knowledge was lost when evangelical Christianity reached the region and the skill was labeled as witchcraft and the people who had any knowledge or used it

were persecuted. They claim the last people who could practice the sacred skill, passed on for generations since it was taught to them by the Cwezi, were killed in 1994 in the Rwandan genocide and the ancient and mystical talent died with them.

THE CWEZI CULT

Whether they possessed supernatural skills or not, the Cwezi were an incredible society and they would have been advanced for their time. The long horned Ankole cows, which are native to the region at the source of the Nile River, are said to have been introduced to the area by the Cwezi and as a society they were skilled at keeping cattle. They enjoyed participating in a wide range of sporting activities such as archery, javelin, and wrestling. They introduced and played a board game called *Omweeso* (also known as *ekisoro*, or *igisoro*), which is still popular in Africa today.

Although they raised cattle, they were largely vegetarian and





The Cwezi created the complicated board game - Omweeso.



Healer covered in clay, wearing dreadlocks, bone necklaces and a scepter.

would mainly have used the cows for their milk. Along with cattle, they also cultivated plants and they were considered very proficient as farmers. They were skilled in combat, but they were mainly pacifists and either retreated or teleported to neutral ground during conflict – traditionalists assert that when the Cwezi returned after a battle they remained invisible to other people in the region. Legends within the Ankole culture state the Cwezi who disappeared can still be heard today, as they live their everyday lives out of the sight of mortal beings. They disappeared from the historical record in the 16th century and even the reasons for this are a matter of debate. Some people – like the Ankole - have argued they are still there but cannot be seen. A more pragmatic explanation is that they were overrun by a group indigenous to the Nile valley called the Luo people, as they had been weakened by both famine and disease. But with so many extraordinary claims and legends surrounding the Cwezi, and their mysterious and sudden disappearance from the record, it is not surprising they have attracted a rather zealous group of followers.

The Cwezi Cult is known both as a 'cult of affliction' and a 'spirit society'. They have been largely overlooked by most sources, but

The Cwezi Cult is known both as a 'cult of affliction' and a 'spirit society'.

they are known locally for their unusual beliefs and an association with dark magic and

witchcraft. The Sukuma people from the African Great Lakes region describe followers of the Cwezi Cult as '*balogi*' which translates to 'witches' and they are surrounded by rumor and speculation.

They are associated with strong use of black magic, extreme secrecy, unusual sexual acts as a part of initiation ceremonies, and cursed items and symbols. It is also believed that any thief who finds the *shishingo* diadem, a Cwezi Cult emblem, in their loot will fall victim to its powers and be killed.

But despite these nefarious and shady associations, the cult is not entirely shunned - they are highly respected for their skills as healers. The ceremonies and initiations they hold for healing are largely performed at night, which further strengthens their associations with witchcraft – and although their healing abilities are respected, they are still feared and not completely trusted by those who call upon their services. There are many traditional cults similar to the Cwezi Cult in Africa, but unlike most of the others, the practitioners of the Cwezi Cult do not try to placate the dead with offerings and sacrifices. Instead, they attempt to communicate with them.

As they walk to events at night, they sing an anthem which serves to reassure the public that they are benevolent and are working as healers. They explain the symptoms the sick person is experiencing are a manifestation of an angry spirit, and that by recognizing the spirit, they will be healed. Within this same reassuring anthem, they name other cults. The anthem describes what the Cwezi Cult does differently, and why it makes a difference to the effectiveness of their ceremonies.

The practitioners of the Cwezi Cult do not try to placate the dead with offerings and sacrifices. Instead, they attempt to communicate with them.

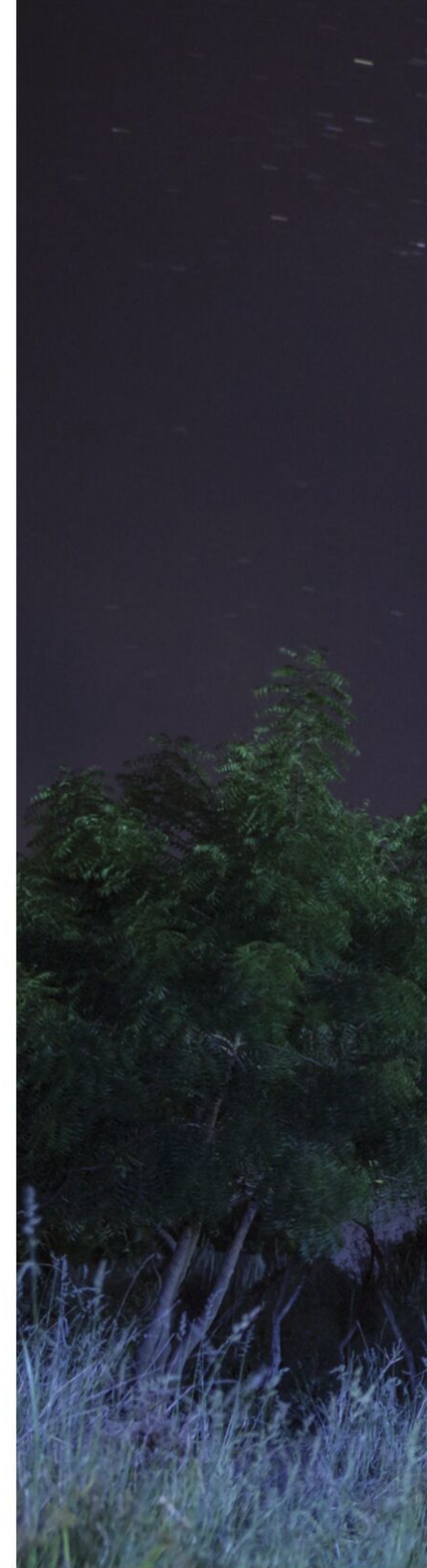
They are proud of the fact they do not just leave votives as offerings to the dead, but actually communicate with them, and they believe this is what makes their magic so effective.

For the Cwezi to heal, they need the person they are treating to become possessed by the spirit causing them problems, so they can communicate directly with the spirit. They ask the

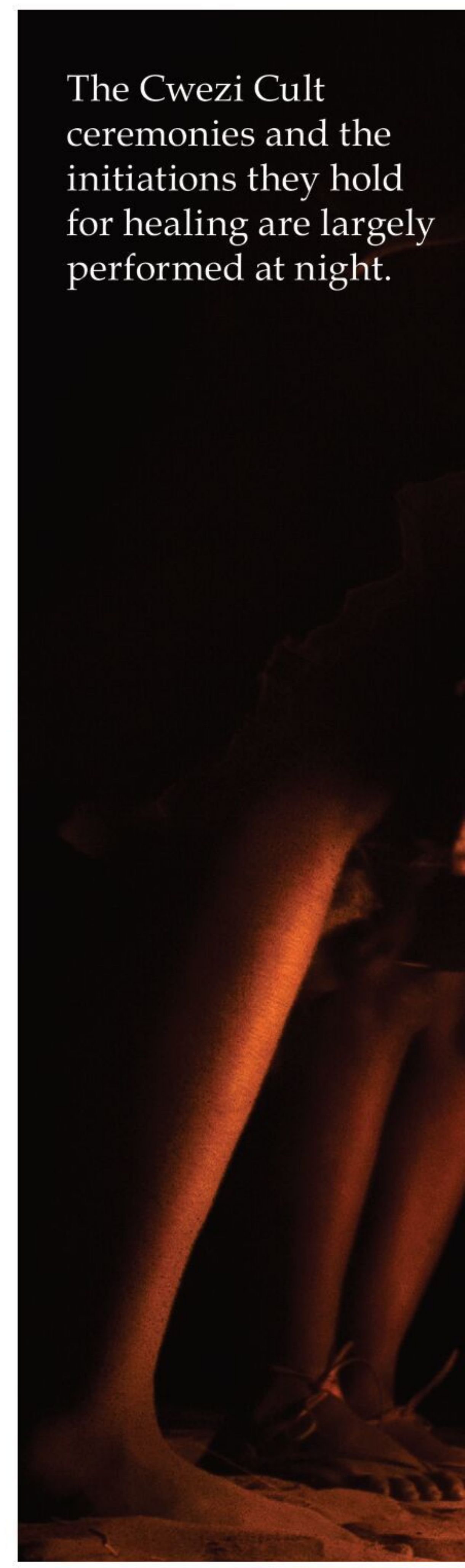
name of the entity, and for it to express what it wants – the answer is usually given in tongues or incomprehensible growls which are interpreted by cult members.

The Cwezi Cult's healing ceremonies last for five grueling days, during which the cult members perform songs and dance. But it is not just the afflicted person

who is possessed by a spirit during this time - members can become possessed too. They call this being 'reached by the ancestor', and at its heart this is what the Cwezi Cult is about. They revere the ancestors who formed the great Cwezi Empire and they believe their ancestors are either still present physically but invisibly, or are watching them as gods from another realm. Although the real nature of the original Cwezi people is a mystery, the impact they had on folklore across Africa is extensive. It seems that everyone they contacted believed they had supernatural powers and they were revered for their unique talents. But for the people who still believe they were superhuman – whether gods, aliens, or spirits - being 'reached by an ancestor' must be a privilege which inspires devotion to a cult, even if it has a dark reputation. ■



The Cwezi Cult ceremonies and the initiations they hold for healing are largely performed at night.







Adamkayalar, Turkey

On the southern slope of the Taurus Mountains in the Mersin Province of Turkey, sits Adamkayalar, a tableau of figures carved into the rock face. There are 11 males, four females, and two children. The date of these figures is unknown, although it is estimated at between the fourth century BC and the second century AD. The story behind the immortalization of these figures in stone remains an enigma, but it is poignantly human, even to the extent of a family dog witnessing a soldier taking leave of his wife and daughter. The sculptors did not aim to showcase imperial might, but rather to capture human emotion.

Spotlight

ANCIENT SPORTS



Panathenaic stadium in Athens, Greece (hosted the first modern Olympic Games in 1896), also known as Kalimarmaro which means good marble stone.



HIEROS GAMOS

THE SPIRIT OF THE ANCIENT OLYMPIC GAMES

|| BY DR. MICKI PISTORIUS



THE spirit of the Olympic Games took flame in the first millennium BC at the Olympia sanctuary in a serene valley called Altis, nestled between the Alpheus and Cladeus Rivers in the regional district of ancient Elis, tucked away in the north-west corner of the Peloponnese peninsula of Greece. It embodied the union of the male and the female, the *Hieros Gamos* or Sacred Marriage, to celebrate fertility and new life born from the Mother-Goddess. Initially only women participated in rituals and games to honor the goddess, but then invaders usurped the land and annexed the sanctuary and installed their male god at Olympia.

The region of Elis was split into three parts; Ceole in the north where the polis of Elis was situated; Pisatis in the middle with the polis of Pisa; and Triphylia, the mountainous area in the south bordering the Alpheus River. The sanctuary of Olympia fell within the administration of Pisa. The name 'Olympia' could derive from the word *Olympus*, an epithet of the goddess Olympia Ge (Mountainous Ge).

The ancient Olympia sanctuary lies at the foot of Mount Kronos in the Altis valley and priestesses and female athletes ascended this hill to a chasm shaped like vulva in the rocky slope, purported to be the sacred abode of the oracle of the ancient Mother-Goddess, where Chthonia, the First Prophetess, shared her prophesies. Votive offerings were left at an altar for the Mother-Goddess who in her shape as Ge, Gaia, Rhea, Hera, Selene, and Demeter, had

been worshipped at this sanctuary since prehistoric times, as pottery dating from the Neolithic (4000 – 3000 BC), to the Middle Helladic (1900 – 1600 BC) indicates. Cycladic marble figurines representing the Mother-Goddess were found in the region.

THE FIGHT FOR OLYMPIA

The sanctuary is located just east of the city of Pisa, whose citizens were Achaeans. By the 12th century BC, at the end of the Bronze Age, the region was invaded by the Dorians (Eleans), who settled there and named it Elis. The Achaeans were forced to retreat beyond the Alpheus River to the Triphylia mountains. During the following centuries the Achaeans and the Eleans played tug-of-war over the sanctuary of Olympia with the Achaeans celebrating the Sacred Marriage at the sanctuary, where the Mother-Goddess played the leading role, and the

Temple Philippeion in the Altis of Olympia.



Illustration of ancient Greek runners with the torch.

Eleans celebrated the games in honor of Zeus, the Father-God.

Describing the history of the Eleans, Pausanias wrote that Endymion, son of King Aethlius of the Eleans, set his sons to run a race at Olympia for the throne; Epeius won and obtained the kingdom, and his subjects were then named Epeans for the first time. In 776 BC, the Elean King Iphitus invited male athletes from all the Hellenic states to participate in the games and this is considered the official date of the first of the ancient Olympic Games.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE HIEROS GAMOS AT OLYMPIA

But before the games became the dominion of a male god, ancient symbolism was embedded in the Hieros Gamos practiced at Olympia.

The Hieros Gamos, a fertility rite, where the female Earth-Goddess is impregnated by the male Sky-God, through his rain (seed) to bring forth

life, was practiced by the Creto-Minoan civilization centuries before the Dorian invasions. In Pelasgic Crete, religious adoration was directed towards the Earth-Mother-Goddess Rhea, and she was worshipped in sacred groves, on mountains, and in caves. Demeter later took on Rhea's title of *Ammas* – Great Mother - stressing the feminine nurturing aspects, also symbolized by the naked breasts of the Snake Goddess figurines of Crete. Later in these fertility rituals the male counterpart in the Hieros Gamos was played by Poseidon, represented by a virile bull. Zeus was still a baby at this stage, hidden on Crete to protect him from Rhea's husband Chronos. Dionysus was also revered on Crete, as a vegetation spirit resurrected each year, to represent the seasonal cycle of nature.

The Creto-Minoan Earth-Rhea religion was not only practiced at

Olympia, but also at Delphi. Before the Oracle of Delphi was attributed to Apollo, it was preceded by Earth-Ghi-Rhea worship, and her spouse Poseidon. (Apollo travelled from Crete to Delphi in the form of a dolphin).

Poseidon, disguised as a stallion, coupled with Demeter, (Da Ma or Earth-Mother) disguised as a mare. Poseidon, father of water, fertilized Gaia-Demeter. Demeter carried the epithet *Malophoros* – apple bringer – and in the male Olympic games the prize for the winner was initially an apple, presented by the priestess of Demeter, who occupied the altar at the end of the Stadium. From here she welcomed the *Hellanodikai* (male judges) and the naked male participants, who entered through the Crypte, symbolizing a cave.

Hera, in her own right, was worshipped under the title *Hippia* and she was associated with both



Traklis Milas / AdobeStock

The Palaestra at the
archaeological site of Ancient Olympia.
(UNESCO World Heritage Site)

the bull and the horse. Hera, as the 'Queen of Heaven,' was also associated with moonlight. She was the mother of rain and had the ability to conceive children without male sperm. Heraea festivals were held all over the Greek world. In Argolis there were three temples for Hera, one between Argos and Mycenae, one at the acropolis at Larissa and the magnificent Heroin in Argos itself. The Heraea of Samos followed the worship of Hera from Argos and was a splendid festival held in her honor. Both men and women participated in these processions. The Bride-to-Be Heraea festival was celebrated on Boeotia where cows were sacrificed to Hera and Taurus Zeus. Her worship at the ancient Olympia *temenos* (temple enclosure or court) was therefore not peculiar or uncommon at the time.

Hera passed her mantle of moonlight on to Selene. The motif of the marriage between the Moon Goddess and Sun-God is strongly represented at Olympia. To return to Endymion, son of King Aethlius, mythology tells that Selene, the Moon-Goddess fell in love with him and their union produced 50 daughters, representing the 50 months between the Olympic games. Endymion came to embody Helios, the Sun-God. Selene and Helios were depicted in the chariot and horses on the plinth of the famous statue of Zeus at Olympia. The 12 rounds of the chariot race may also present the zodiac or the 12 cycles of the lunar goddess.

At Olympia after the Doric invasion, both Zeus and Dionysus had reached maturity as gods and donned the hide of Poseidon's Cretan bull, as both were honored



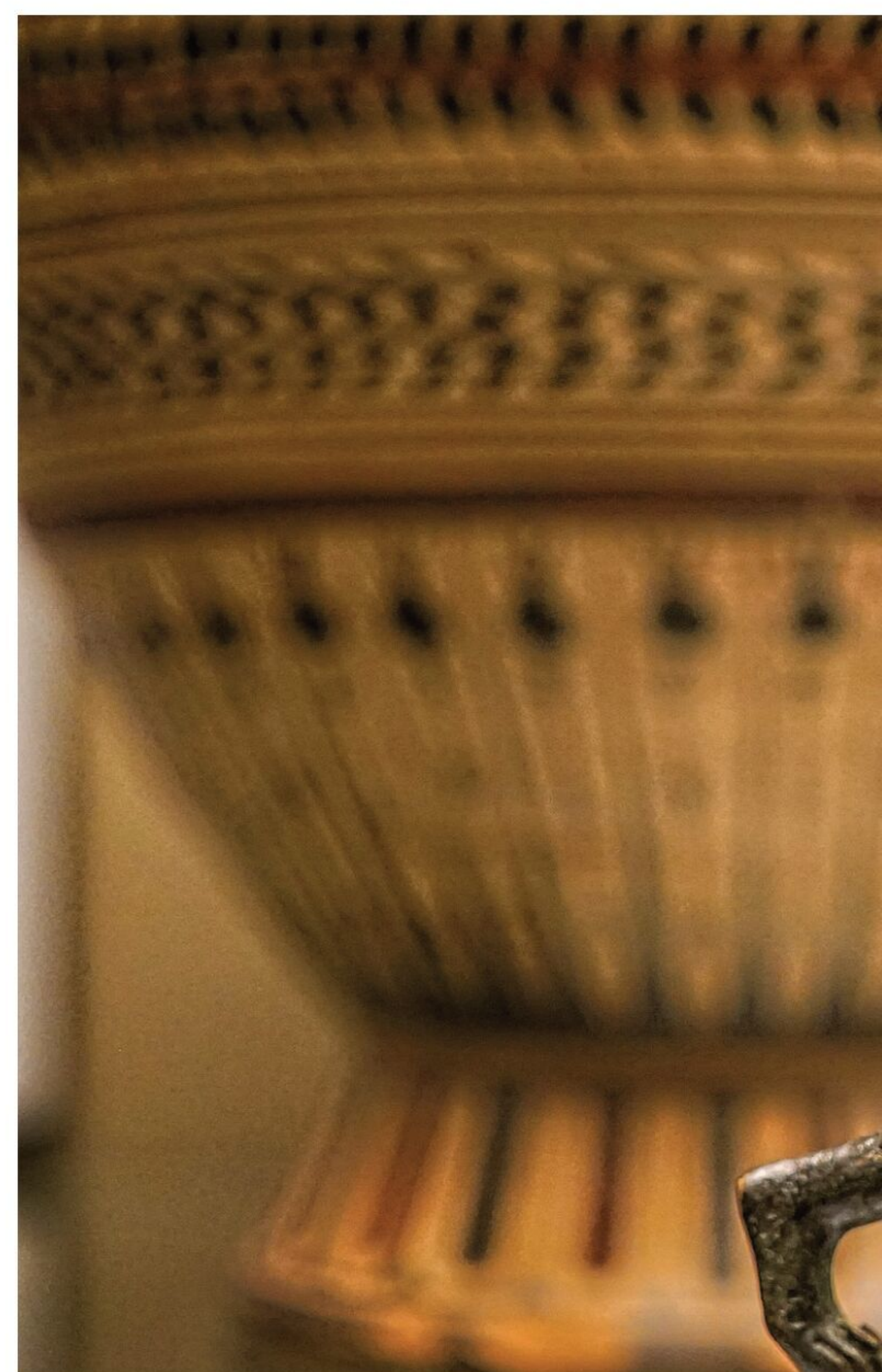
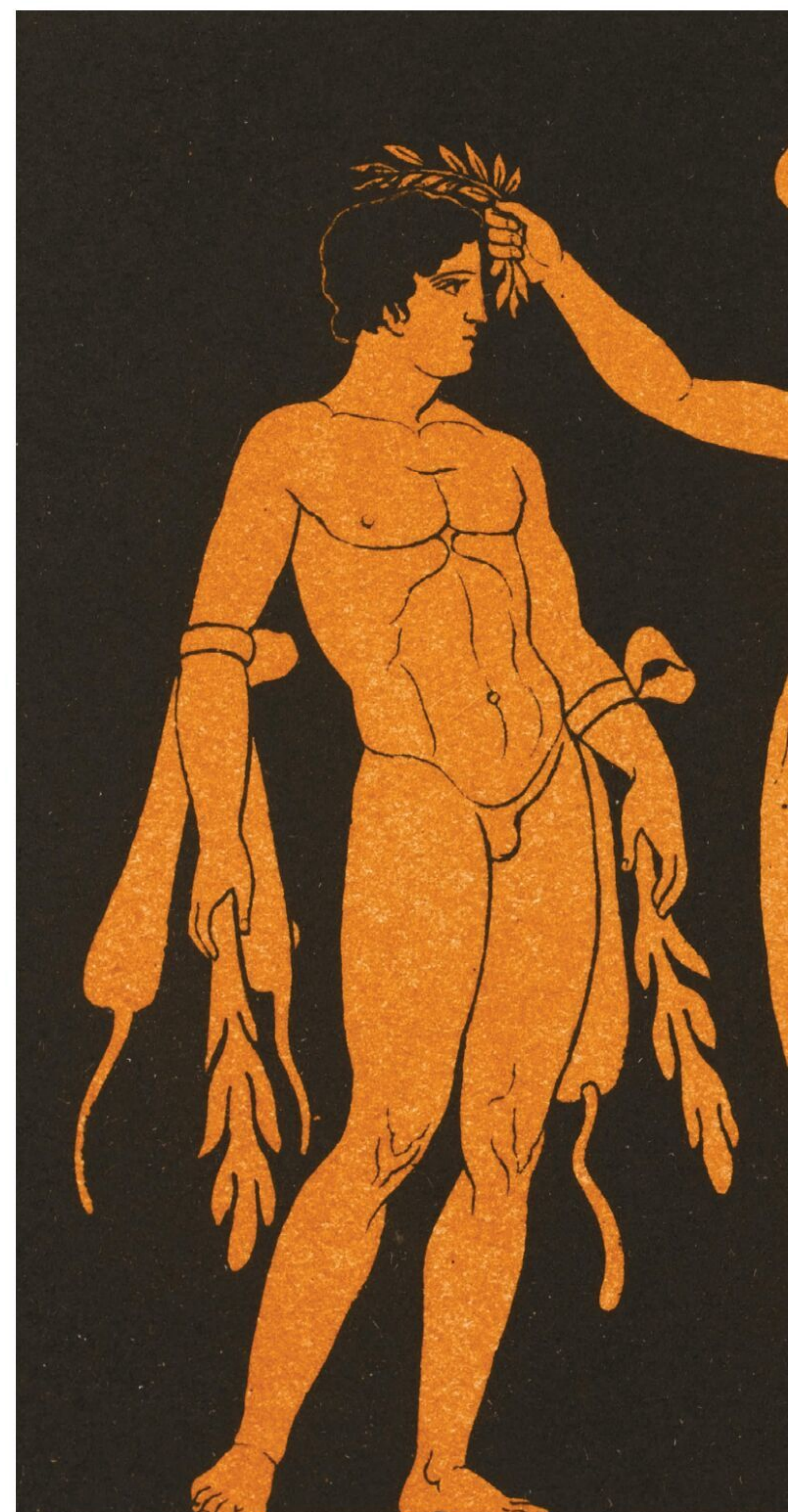
Statue of the ancient Greek goddess Hera.

during the Olympic games. Zeus was honored on the third day of the games when a hundred bovines were offered at his altar. The Eleans commemorated Regilla as the donor of an aqueduct on the site with a marble bull. In Elis Dionysus was invoked as the "worthy bull."

THE LEGEND OF HIPPODAMEIA AND PELOPS

The love story between Selene and Endymion was enacted by the legend of Hippodameia and Pelops, who gave his name to the Peloponnese. Pelops was also the ancestor of the house of Atreus, ancestor to Agamemnon and Menelaus of the Trojan War.

Hippodameia (Horsetamer) was the daughter of King Oenomaus of Pisa, who believed a prophecy that he would be killed by his daughter's husband. He promised his daughter's hand to the winner of a chariot race, all the way from Olympia to the isthmus of Corinth, but Oenomaus had winged horses





Representation of a Greek athlete being crowned by a goddess.



Bronze figure of a running girl, 520-500 BC. Spartan. The short chiton bearing one breast matches the outfit that Pausanias says was worn by athletes competing in the Heraean Games.

gifted to him by his father, the god of war, Ares. No suitor could match these magical horses and 13 of them paid with their lives. Along came Pelops of Phrygia, son of Tantalus, who once was a favorite of Poseidon. He asked Poseidon for a pair of winged horses who would never tire and he received them. With equally matched magical horses both parties had a chance to win, but Pelops bribed Oenomaus' charioteer, Myrtilus, to substitute the linchpins in Oenomaus' chariot with wax pins, which failed during the race. Oenomaus lost and was killed and Pelops won the hand of Hippodameia and the land. To celebrate their wedding, Pelops held the male games in honor of Zeus and Hippodameia held the games in honor of Hera, the goddess of marriage.

THE HERAEA AND OLYMPIC GAMES

The Heraea games honoring Hera were held every fourth year, consisting of foot races run by virgins of three different age groups. The length of the race was 524 feet, about 5/6 of the Stadium. The athletes wore a short tunic, with a naked right breast and their hair was unbound. The exposed breast symbolized femininity and motherhood.

Goddess symbolism pervades these games. The winners were crowned with olive branch wreaths – a tree sacred to the Earth-Goddess as its oil was used for food, fuel, and skincare. The silver color of the olive leaf refers to the silver of the moon. Once crowned with the olive



wreath, the winner became *Callistephanos* – a beautiful nymph and incarnate of the goddess. Pausanias mentions Chloris, daughter of Niobe and Amphion, as the winner of the first Heraea. Chloris was the Greek name for the Roman Flora, goddess of fruits and plants. The symbolism of the cycles of nature and fertility harkening back to the ancient rites is quite clear.

Hippodameia had appointed 16 women to help her arrange the games. They acted as judges and were assisted by handmaidens. These 16 priestesses had to weave clothes for the goddess Hera and choreographed dances for the athletes. It is believed that a statue – now in the Olympia Museum – represents Poppaea, Nero's wife in the guise of one of these 16 priestesses.

The festival of Olympia began on the first full moon after the summer solstice.

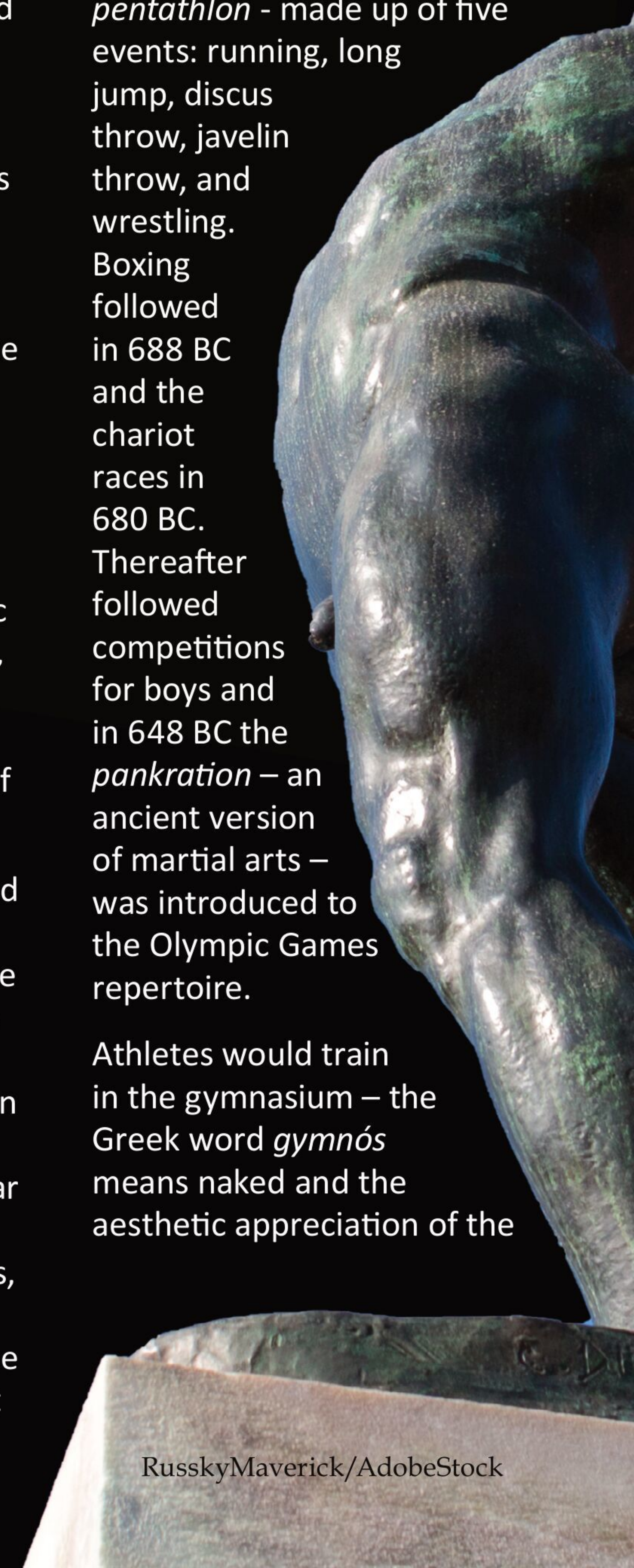
The male version of the Olympic games was divided in two parts, the first being the races and the sacrifices to Zeus, and the second the banquets in honor of the victors.

The male Olympic games marked the first of the four Panhellenic games, the other three being the Pythian Games honoring Apollo at Delphi, held two years after the Olympic Games; the Nemean Games honoring Zeus and Heracles at Nemea, held the year before and after the Olympic Games; and the Isthmian Games, honoring Poseidon at the isthmus of Corinth held the same year as the Nemean Games, but at a different time of that year.

The four-year cycle was known as the Olympiad and would carry the name of the winner of the foot race.

Initially the male Olympic games consisted only of a foot race, called a *stadion*, which was 620 feet long. In 776 BC Koroibos of Elis – a baker – was the first athlete to win the race of the first official Olympic Games. Different variations of the foot race were held for several decades. The year 708 BC marked the debut of the *pentathlon* - made up of five events: running, long jump, discus throw, javelin throw, and wrestling. Boxing followed in 688 BC and the chariot races in 680 BC. Thereafter followed competitions for boys and in 648 BC the *pankration* – an ancient version of martial arts – was introduced to the Olympic Games repertoire.

Athletes would train in the gymnasium – the Greek word *gymnós* means naked and the aesthetic appreciation of the

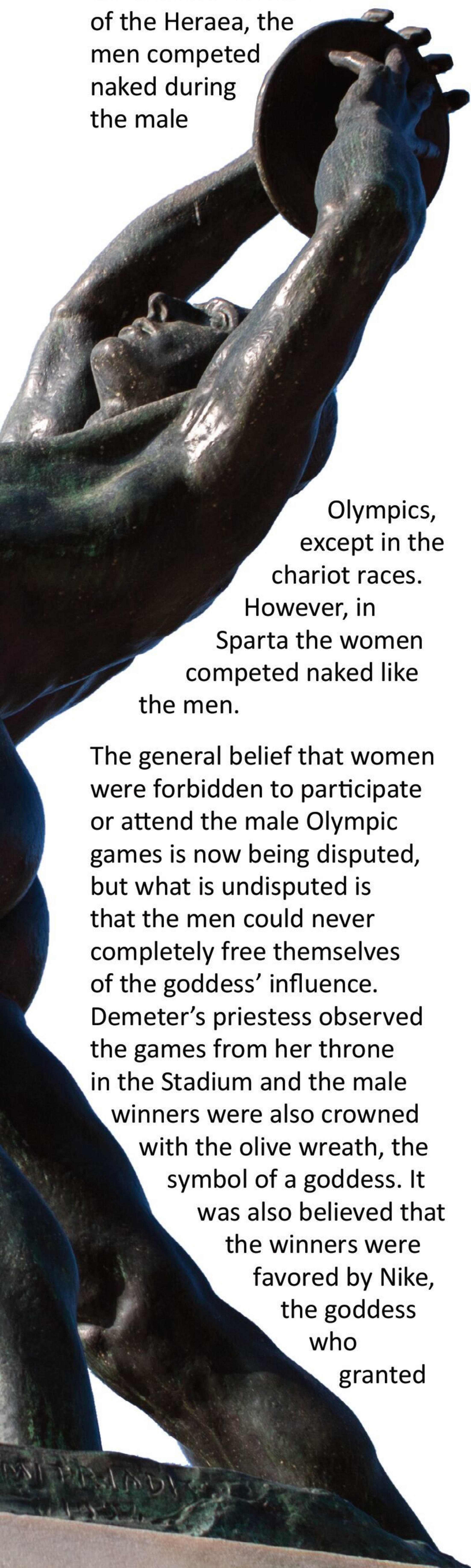


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male physique was considered a tribute to the gods. Unlike the women athletes of the Heraea, the men competed naked during the male



Olympics, except in the chariot races. However, in Sparta the women competed naked like the men.

The general belief that women were forbidden to participate or attend the male Olympic games is now being disputed, but what is undisputed is that the men could never completely free themselves of the goddess' influence. Demeter's priestess observed the games from her throne in the Stadium and the male winners were also crowned with the olive wreath, the symbol of a goddess. It was also believed that the winners were favored by Nike, the goddess who granted

success, even in battle.

Women owned many of the chariots that were raced by men! Cynisca, sister to the King of Sparta Agesilaus, became the first woman to be crowned a champion in the male Olympics as she won the *tethrippon* – a chariot drawn by four horses, twice. Her example was followed by another Spartan woman, Euryleonis, who won the *synoris* – a chariot drawn by two horses.

Women owned many of the chariots that were raced by men!

columns were later replaced by marble columns.

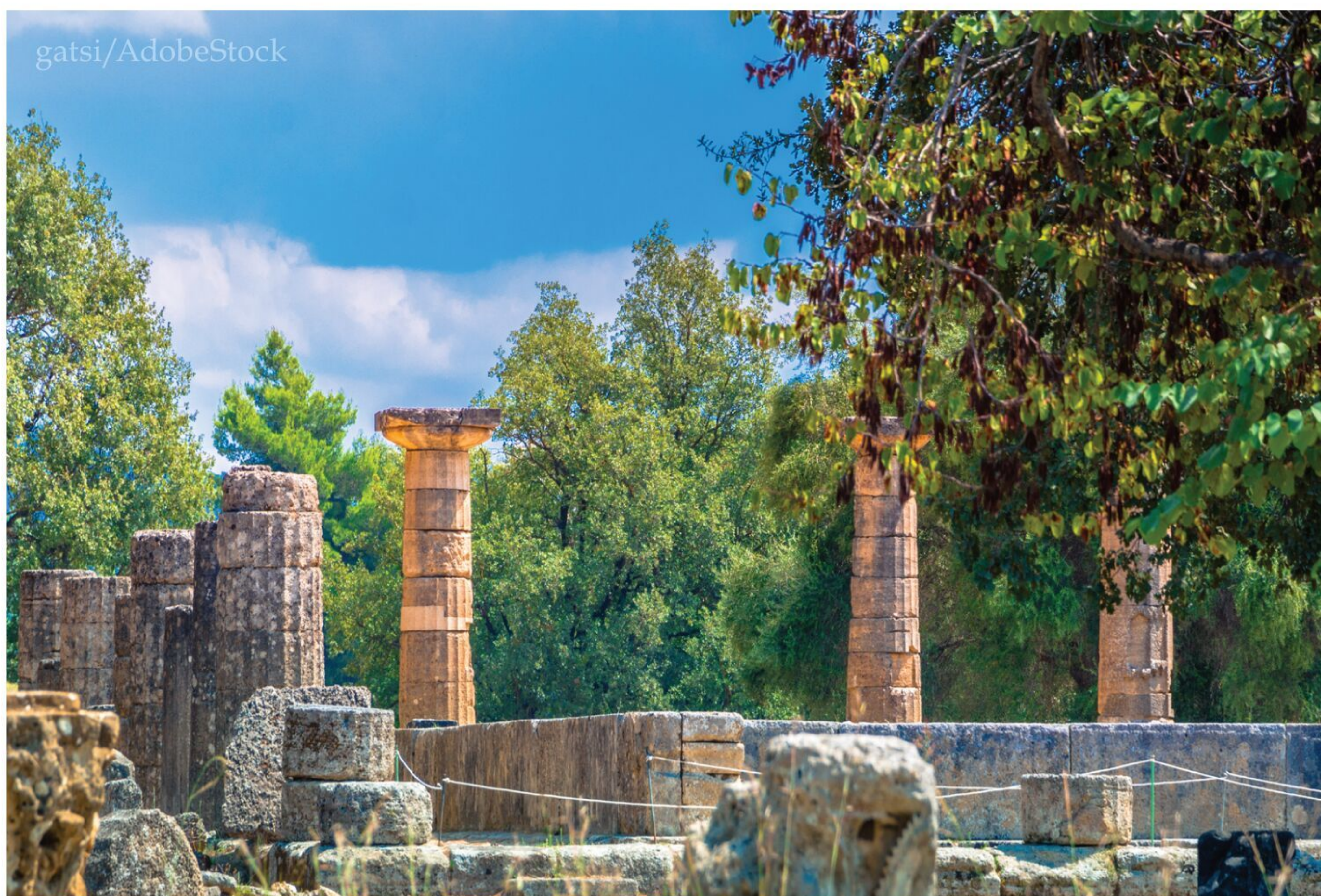
Pausanias offers a description of the assembly of goddesses and

to the eighth and seventh centuries BC which were destroyed by fire. The majestic Heraeum temple was 164 feet long, about 62 feet wide and about 26 feet high. The original wooden

gods in the Heraeum: "In the temple of Hera [at Olympia] is an image of Zeus, and the image of Hera is sitting on a throne with Zeus standing by her, bearded and with a helmet on his head. They are crude works of art. The figures of Horai (Seasons) next to them, seated upon thrones, were made by the Aeginetan Smilis. Beside them stands an image of Themis, as being mother of the Horai. It is the work of Dorykleidas . . The Hesperides, five in number,

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF OLYMPIA

The first and oldest temple to be erected at the western border of the Olympia sanctuary, during the Archaic period, was the Heraeum, dedicated to the cult of Hera and built by the Scillounteans of Triphylia. Temples were often built on older temple sites and there are indications of older structures dating



Ruins at ancient Olympia, Greece. The Olympic flame ceremony begins here.
Left: Bronze discobolus from the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens.



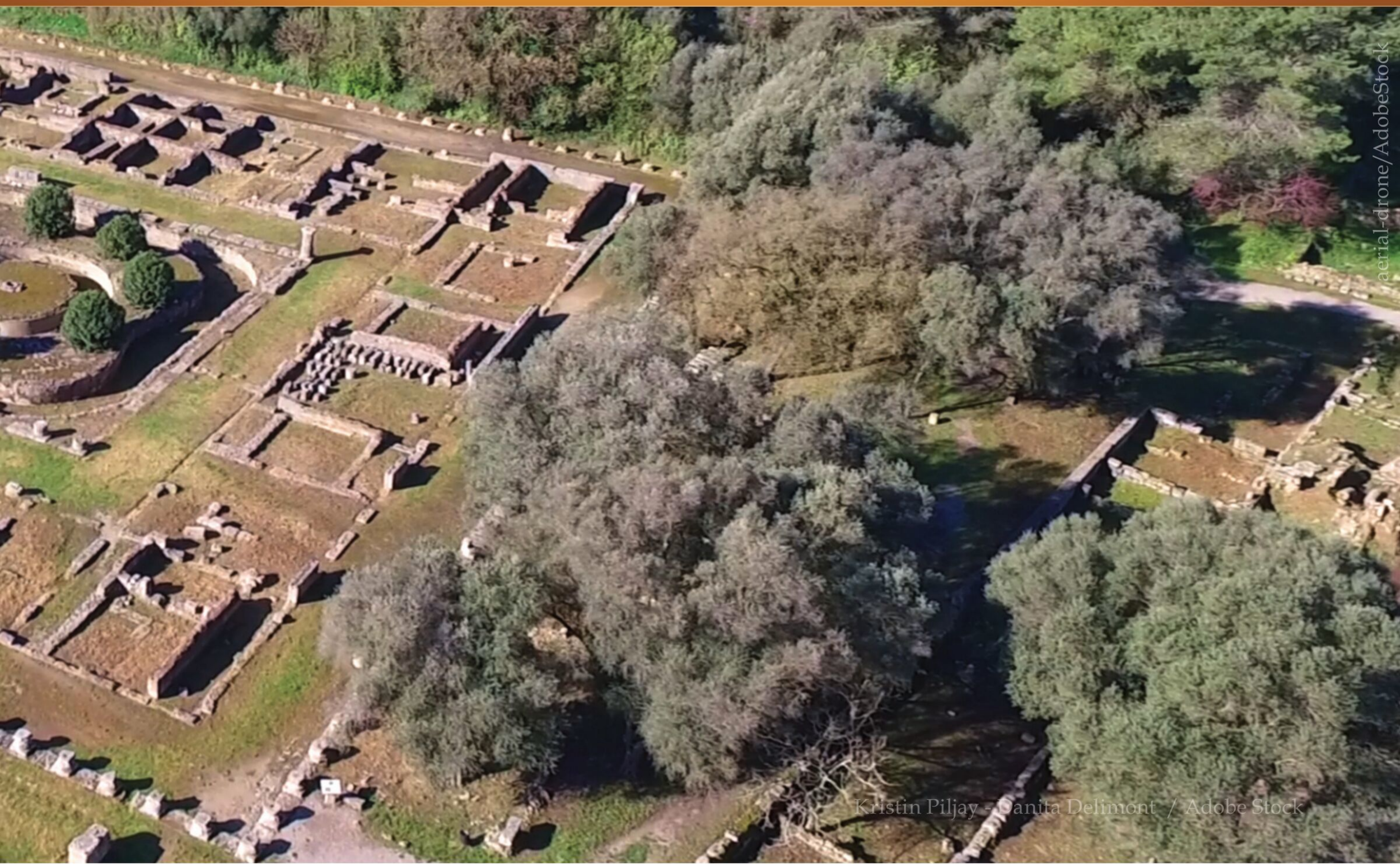
Aerial drone photo of ancient Olympia, Peloponnese, Greece.

were made by Theokles . . . The Athena wearing a helmet and carrying a spear and shield is, it is said, a work of Medon . . . Then Kore (the Maid) and Demeter sit opposite each other, while Apollon and Artemis stand opposite each other. Here too have been dedicated Leto, Tykhe (Fortune), Dionysos and a winged Nike (Victory)."

Only the colossal head of the statue of Hera, dating from the sixth century BC, survived. The famous statue of Hermes holding a young Dionysus was also discovered in the ruins of the Heraeum, as well as the statue of the goddess of victory, Nike.



Colossal head, presumably representing Hera, from the Heraion of Olympia.



aerial-drone / AdobeStock

Kristin Piljay - Danita Delimont / Adobe Stock

The Pelopion, a shrine to Pelops, is a cenotaph south of the Heraeum. A black ram was sacrificed to Pelops annually. Close to Pelops' shrine copper statues of two horses and their charioteers were discovered.

Structures modeled after the Heraeum were built during the Classical and Hellenistic periods.

Next to the Heraeum is the Nymphaeum. Nymphs are chthonic – of the earth – and producers of food and fertility. They serve the Earth-Goddess. The *Callistephanos Elaea* was the 'Olive Tree of the Beautiful Wreath', right next to the Nymphaeum.

Despite the victory of the Eleans in 364 BC and their preference

for male dominated religion, a temple honoring Rhea, the Metroum, and an altar for her were erected between the Nymphaeum and the Stadium. Rhea was the daughter of Gaia and the mother of both Hera and Zeus.

The Stadium where the races took place was 697.3 feet long and 98–112 feet wide. The track was made of hard-packed clay to serve as traction for the contestants in the running events. The grave of Endymion was found at the beginning of the Stadium. The Crypte was a vaulted tunnel leading to the Stadium.

By the late fifth century BC the Eleans had almost completely subjugated the Achaeans and

erected a temple for Zeus at the sanctuary. A final battle ensued in 364 BC which finally heralded a victory for the Eleans. Like the magnificent statue of Hera, Zeus was also immortalized by a famous gold and marble statue, made by Phidias, which is considered to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

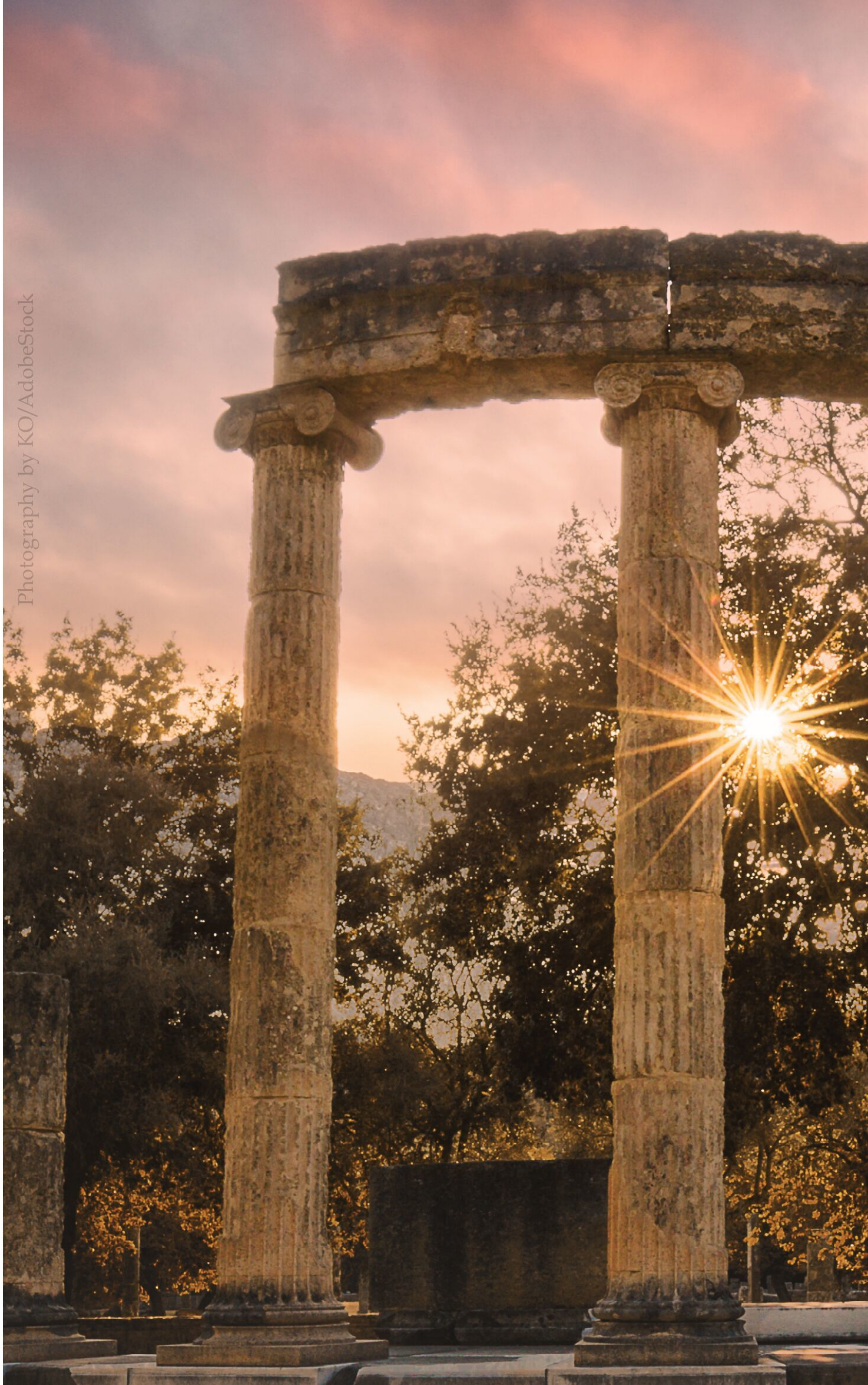
The western pediment of Zeus' temple depicts the clash between the Lapiths and the Centaurs at the wedding of Perithous, best friend of Theseus. This is significant as Hera is considered the mother of the Centaurs. Ixion, King of the Lapiths of Thessaly, lusted after Hera, who informed her husband Zeus. Zeus created

a cloud in her image and the drunken Ixion coupled with the cloud, which produced a child, the first Centaur, half-man, half-horse. Centaurs lived close to Olympia on the plateau of Pholoe and the mountain at Pisa is called Lapithos. On the eastern pediment the marriage of Hippodameia and Pelops is depicted, illustrating the battle between Pelops and King Oenomaus. The Hippodameium, a shrine to Hippodameia, is believed to be west of Zeus' temple, but it has not been discovered yet. However, a copper statue of Hippodameia was found at the end of the hippodrome.

To the left of Zeus' temple lies the workshop of the sculptor Phidias. He was celebrated for his statues in bronze and chryselephantine - statues made of gold and ivory - and took 13 years to complete the statue of Zeus.

In 393 AD, Emperor Theodosius banned the Olympic games as they were considered pagan. The magnificent gold and ivory statue of Zeus was carried off to Constantinople where it was burnt and in 426 AD Zeus' temple at Olympia was burned as well on the orders of Theodosius II. The sanctuary fell in ruins. Two centuries later a Christian church was built on the ruins of Phidias' workshop.

In 393 AD,
Emperor Theodosius
banned the Olympic
games as they were
considered pagan.



Sunset at ancient Olympia, Greece.

THE FLAME LIVES ON

The Olympic Games were revived in 1896 in Athens. Since 1928, every fourth year, in front of the ruins of the Heraeum temple at Olympia, a priestess dressed in a Hellenic tunic flashes a parabolic mirror to ignite a torch with the sun's rays. She transmits the flame to a clay pot and joins

a procession of priestesses who enter the Stadium. They light the torch with the holy flame and hand it to the torch runner, who runs through the sacred grove of Altis, and hands the torch to the next, who runs the relay... and so they carry the torch to the Panathenaic stadium in Athens, where it is passed



BEFORE THE OLYMPIAD THERE WAS THE PANATHENAEA

The Panathenaea was an ancient and important festival celebrated in the ancient Greek city state of Athens. This festival was held in honor of Athena Polias, the city's patron goddess, and Erechtheus, the legendary founder of the city. The first Panathenaea is said to have been held 729 years before the first Olympiad. The original name of the festival is believed to have been Athenaea. When Attica was united by Theseus, however, the festival's name was changed to Panathenaea, which meant that the festival was to be celebrated not only by the Athenians, but also by the inhabitants of Attica.

The Panathenaea featured a number of contests that were open to all the Hellenes, including musical, gymnastic, and equestrian contests. The prize given to the victors of these contests was a vase containing some oil from the ancient and sacred olive tree of Athena on the acropolis.

The Panathenaic Stadium or Kallimarmaro in Athens - the only stadium in the world built entirely of marble - was built on the site of a simple racecourse by the Athenian statesman Lykourgos (c. 330 BC), primarily for the Panathenaic Games. It was rebuilt in marble by Herodes Atticus, an Athenian Roman senator, by 144 AD and had a capacity of 50,000 seats. After the rise of Christianity in the fourth century it was largely abandoned. The stadium was excavated in 1869 and it hosted the opening and closing ceremonies of the first modern Olympics in 1896.

on to the torch of the city chosen to host the Games. There the Olympic flame ignites the cauldron at the venue where men and women participate to commemorate the Hieros Gamos of the Mother-Earth-Goddess and the Father-Sky-God, of man and woman - as the ancient gods intended it to be. ■



EVIDENCE SUGGESTS

GLADIATORS CONSUMED PLANT ASH FOR BONE STRENGTH

|| BY JOANNA GILLAN

RESEARCHERS studying ancient remains discovered evidence that gladiators drank a beverage made from plant ash, vinegar, and water that was rich in calcium, essential for enhancing bone strength. Their study provides biological evidence to confirm ancient texts claiming that gladiators drank an ash-based drink for recovery.

The researchers analyzed the battle-scarred remains of 22 gladiators found in a mass burial pit in Turkey dating to the second and third century AD, and compared them to the remains of 31 citizens from the same era and region. Using carbon, nitrogen, and sulfur isotope analysis, the scientists were able to determine that there were no significant differences between the diets of gladiators and the general population.

Gladiators had almost twice the ratio of strontium to calcium in their bones.





Both groups appear to have had a mostly vegetarian diet that was high in nitrogen-fixing plants, such as lentils, barley, and beans. This supports descriptions of gladiator diets in ancient texts. Roman historians sometimes called gladiators *hordearii* ("barley eaters"), while ancient texts by Roman scholars Pliny, Galen and Tacitus describe a gladiator diet of barley and bell beans.

It was when the research team decided to test the ratio of the elements strontium and calcium in the bones that the huge difference between the two groups jumped out. The gladiators had almost twice the ratio of strontium to calcium in their bones when compared to other populations. Study lead Fabian Kanz, a forensic anthropologist at the Medical University of Vienna in Austria, explained that plant eaters have higher levels of strontium. Since there were no significant differences in diet between the gladiators and the general population, the gladiators must have been getting this nutrient boost from elsewhere.

The beverage was made from plant ash, vinegar, and water and it was rich in calcium.

A GLADIATOR RECOVERY DRINK

"This is strong evidence that the gladiators were consuming something high in calcium to replenish their calcium stores that other people weren't and that didn't show up in the isotopes," says Kristina Killgrove, a biological anthropologist who studies imperial Rome through ancient bones. "Plant ashes were evidently consumed to fortify the body after physical exertion, and to promote better bone healing," said Kanz.

In his *Naturalis Historia*, published in the first century, Pliny the Elder wrote: "Your hearth should be your medicine chest. Drink lye made from its ashes, and you will be cured." According to Kanz, consuming plant ash could have provided the extra heaping of strontium identified in the gladiator bones. However the scientists could not rule out other possible explanations, such as the consumption of dairy - which doesn't show up in isotopes.

"Plant ashes were evidently consumed to fortify the body after physical exertion, and to promote better bone healing"



TOP 5

ANCIENT MARTIAL ARTS

THAT ARE STILL PRACTICED TODAY

Movies, television shows, and cartoons are populated with dazzling martial artists ranging from the kung fu antics of Hong Kong Phooey the crime fighting dog, the mesmerizing Jeet Kune Do of Bruce Lee, or even the secret arts of ninjutsu as applied by deadly black-clad ninjas. However, all of these sensationalized martial arts are relatively modern conceptions of the oldest deadly arts, ancient systems of hand-to-hand combat which were hatched during the earliest



|| By Ashley Cowie



moments in the development of human civilization.

The term “martial arts” comes from the Latin for “arts of Mars”, the Roman god of war and conflict. But to get to the origins of the many different combat styles, we must go back to a time in human evolution when the Latin language had not even been conceptualized. Join us as we explore five of the world’s oldest martial arts.



Contests were savage, they only ended when one of the fighters submitted, was rendered unconscious, or died.

PANKRATION



Pankratiasts fighting under the eyes of a trainer. Side A of an Attic black-figure skyphos, c. 500 BC.

PANKRATION

The word "Pankration" comes from $\pi\alpha\nu$ (*pan*), signifying "all", and $\kappa\rho\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\varsigma$ (*kratos*) meaning "strength, might, power."

Together the word translates to mean "all power," which implied that the winner of the sport was the one who had complete power and control of his foes. Originating around 2000 BC, Greek mythology claims the Pankration system was applied by the legendary Heracles (Hercules) when he fought the Nemean Lion, and also by Theseus when fighting the Minotaur. Some modern historians attribute the origins of Pankration as having been developed as a war technique by the Spartan hoplites

and Alexander the Great's Macedonian phalanx. Pankration was introduced to the ancient Greek Olympics in 648 BC.



Pankration scene: the pankratiast on the right tries to gouge his opponent's eye.

According to Michael Poliakoff's 1986 book *Studies in the Terminology of Greek Combat Sport*, the art of Pankration combined boxing and wrestling, and permitted kicking, holds, locks, and chokes. Contests were savage, with battering, twisting of limbs, strangling, and struggling on the ground. They only ended when one of the fighters submitted, was rendered unconscious, or died. Although Pankration was not reinstated as an event when the Olympic Games were revived in 1896, modern Pankration tournaments are still held, in which the fighting style has become a niche form of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA).

SHUAI JIAO

SHUAI JIAO

Ancient Chinese imperial records made in 2697 BC detail the activities of soldiers practicing an ancient style of military kung fu known as *jiao dǐ* (which means “horn butting”) in the winter. The soldiers wore horned headgear and attempted to “butt” and throw their enemies out of a circle. This particular fighting discipline has been described as the original source of “all” later forms of martial arts in China. A later development, *jiao li*, was first referenced in the Classic of Rites during the Zhou Dynasty. It brought in a range of new blocks, joint locks, and strikes on pressure points.

This discipline of martial arts became a very popular public sport, but these community events were actually clever devices used by the fight organizers as a way to highlight and recruit the strongest fighters on a local level to fight for the potential reward of being hired as one of the emperor’s bodyguards. The term *shuai jiao* was chosen by the Central Guoshu Academy of Nanjing in 1928 when the fighting rules were formalized. Shuai jiao continues to be taught in police and military academies in China today.

This particular fighting discipline has been described as the original source of “all” later forms of martial arts in China.

Wuyouyuan / CC BY-SA 3.0



Part of a drawing depicting Chinese shuai jiao wrestlers during a demonstration.

Yasser Elrasoul / CC BY-SA 4.0



Tahtib.

TAHTIB



TAHTIB

Dating back about 5,000 years, tahtib is a traditional martial art which originated in Egypt. It is a type of stick fighting during which two men face each other holding a four-foot-long stick for a battle that resembles a fencing duel. The oldest evidence of the sport was discovered at the necropolis of Abusir in the suburbs of Cairo, in engravings that include depictions of tahtib, wrestling, and archery, in what appears to be military training.

The tahtib duel begins when the participants pick up their sticks and then greet each other. When they hold their sticks with both hands, fighting commences. The game is governed by values including harmony, friendship, chivalry, mutual respect, and strength, and it is deemed a

non-violent exchange between adversaries. Lasting only about a minute, the objective is to touch your rival with the stick, either a single touch to the head or three touches to the body, though hitting hands, arms, and shoulders is not allowed. This requires inordinate control.



Egyptian Antiquity from
the Louvre Museum

These days tahtib functions more like a performative stick dance, used for entertainment during holidays and weddings. It is usually accompanied by the playing of traditional folk music featuring the mizmar (a kind of Egyptian wind instrument) and derbouka drum. UNESCO listed tahtib on the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2016, and some participants hope to see the sport attain Olympic status.

The game is governed by values including harmony, friendship, chivalry, mutual respect, and strength, and it is deemed a non-violent exchange between adversaries.



Bhima is the Hindu god and protector of Bhimaseni, the manipulation of one's opponents weight, using gravity and sheer strength.

Terracotta sculpture of wrestlers from Uttar Pradesh in India, dating back to the 5th century.



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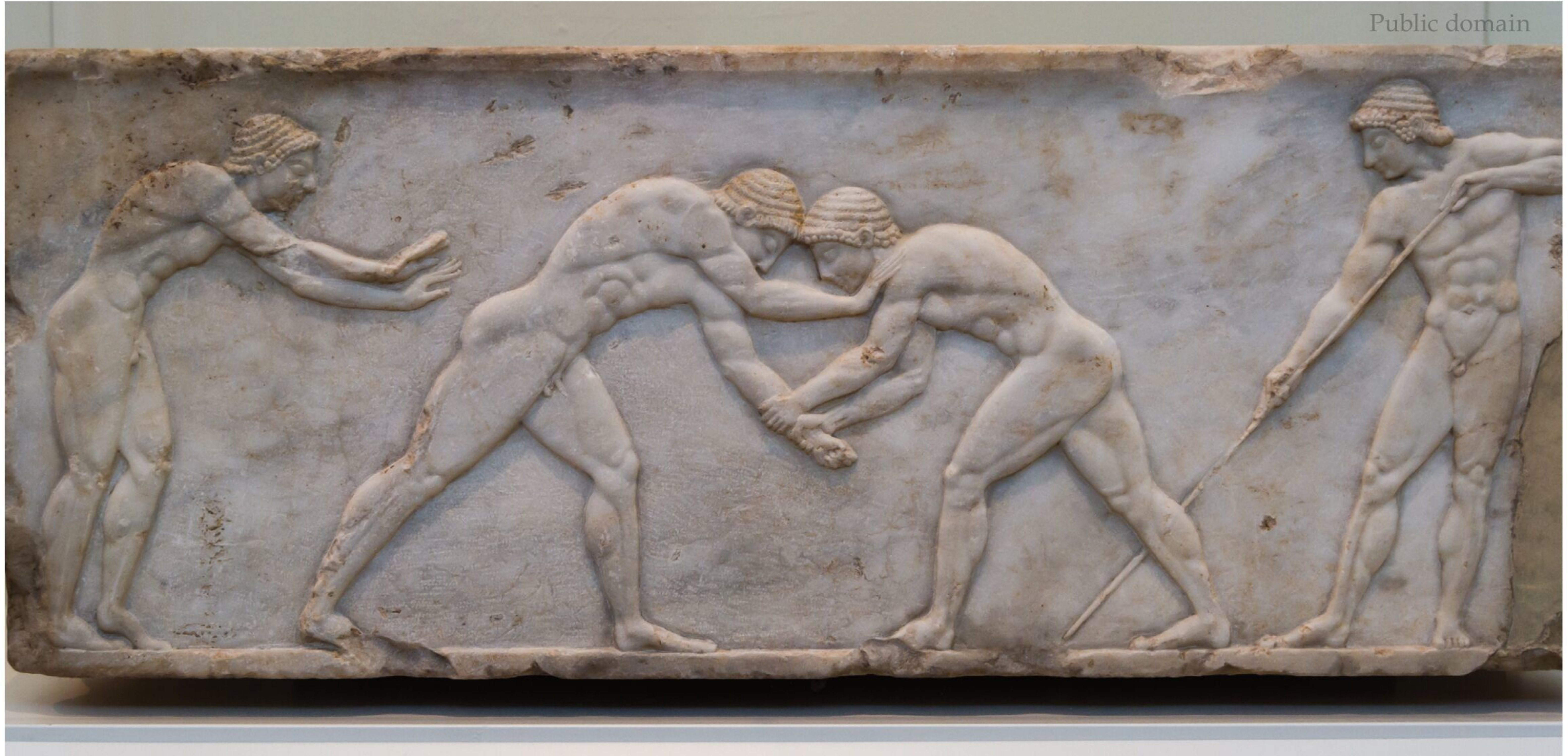
Classic malla-yudda is divided into four fighting styles, each named after and protected by a Hindu god.

MALLA-YUDDA

Malla-yudda emerged as early as 3000 BC in several South Asian countries, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. In Sanskrit, *mallayuddha* translates as "wrestling combat" and refers to a prize-fight more than any particular style or school of wrestling. A famous Indian folktale tells of a legendary Malay hero who was a specialist in malla-yudda. The earliest written record of the event is found in the *Mahabharata*, a 5th century BC ancient Indian epic.

Classic malla-yudda is divided into four fighting styles, each named after and protected by a Hindu god: *Jambuvanti* adopts locks and holds to force opponents into submission; *Hanumanti* concentrates on technical superiority; *Jarasandhi* practices the breaking of limbs and dislocation of joints; and *Bhimaseni* is the manipulation of one's opponents weight, using gravity and sheer strength. Malla-yudda lost popularity at the end of the 16th century, but it is still practiced in small communities of fighters across South Asia.

WRESTLING/GRAPPLING



Public domain

Wrestlers on a pedestal of a kouros, about 510 BC, Greece.

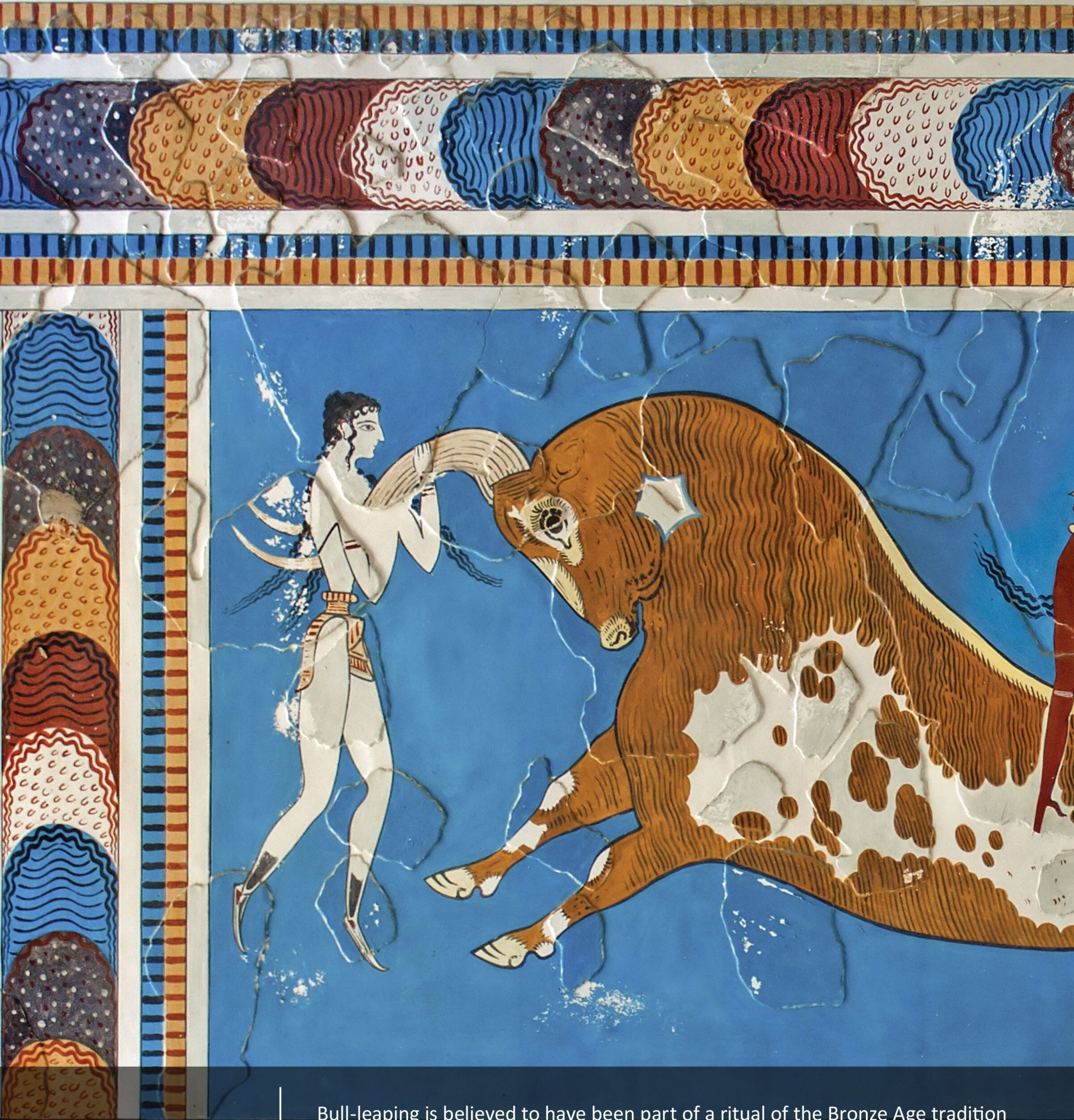
WRESTLING/GRAPPLING

Forms of grappling and wrestling were recorded by many ancient cultures, which makes it impossible to pinpoint the true origin of the martial art. However, unarmed wrestling is accepted as the oldest combat technique in history. Wrestling was clearly depicted in ancient Egypt around 2000 BC, but there are even older statues which depict men grappling. If we are to accept some claims, wrestling is even depicted in 15,000-year-old cave drawings in France.

In ancient Greece, wrestling was taught to soldiers, who were all experts in hand-to-hand combat. As wrestling evolved, it became a very popular

Olympic sport and was recorded at the 18th Olympiad event in 704 BC. A 2nd century BC Greek papyrus manuscript detailing wrestling instructions is currently the earliest known European martial arts guidance manual.

Martial arts are ancient codified systems and traditions of hand-to-hand combat sequences and techniques. With ancient origins in self-defense and tribal territorial conquest, martial arts evolved for military purposes, law enforcement, and within systems of conscious and spiritual development. Today, the highly-trained warriors of the ancient arts are still providers of some of our best forms of entertainment throughout the world.■



Bull-Leaping Fresco, Crete

Bull-leaping is believed to have been part of a ritual of the Bronze Age tradition of bull worship, emphasized by the wealth of terracotta statues, stone seals, and even sarcophagi. But none demonstrate bull-leaping as eloquently as the famous Toreador fresco at Knossos, palace of the Minoans on Crete. This one picture captures the three successive death-defying stages of the acrobatic jump; the female athlete (in white) grabbing the bull by the horns, the other male completing the somersault on its back; and the white female landing behind the bull.



GAIUS APPULEIUS DIOCLES

THE \$15 BILLION ATHLETE OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

|| BY KERRY SULLIVAN

A statue of Gaius Appuleius Diocles.





Fernando Cortés / AdobeStock

GAIUS Appuleius Diocles was born in approximately 104 AD in Lamecum, the capital city of Lusitania, province of Emerita Augusta (modern-day Portugal). His father owned a small-time transport business and the family was comparatively well off. Diocles is believed to have started racing at the age of 18 in Ilerda (modern-day Catalonia) and quickly gained a reputation good enough to get himself called up to the 'big leagues' in Rome. Known there as the Lamecus, Diocles brought considerable renown to his hometown.

In Rome, much like today's Formula 1, competitors were affiliated to a team that managed the charioteers, horses, equipment, and training. Diocles began driving for the White team, usually drawn from the lower orders of society. Being a natural charioteer, Diocles joined the popular Green team at age 24,

and was then strangely transferred to the Red Team at age 27. Some historians speculate that Diocles' switch from the popular Greens to the Reds had a simple motivation: wealth and glory. The Greens were undoubtedly the most popular and attracted the greatest racers. By switching to the Red team, Diocles ensured that he would stand out as the greatest of the Reds – and reap the financial benefits that went along with it. Being the best in the field also seems to have allowed Diocles to perfect his showmanship. Many of his victories took the form of a 'come from behind' crossing of the finish line at the last possible moment. The crowds loved it. Any race with Diocles quickly became the 'featured event' of the day. This naturally helped Diocles make even more money and gain fame.

Some historians speculate that Diocles' switch from the popular Greens to the Reds had a simple motivation: wealth and glory.

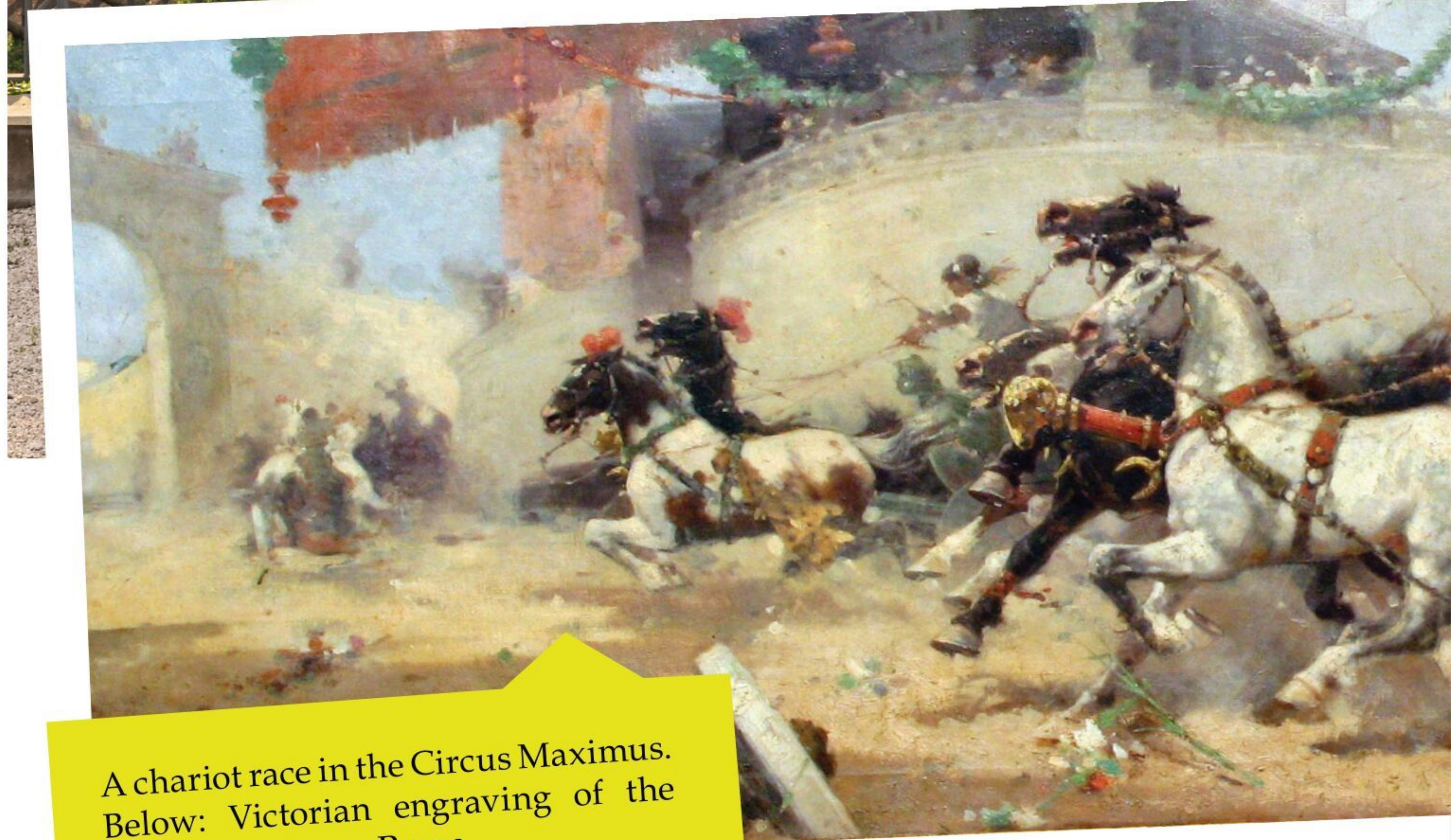
CHAMPION OF CHARIOTEERS

The second-century star did not make his money through sponsorships or marketing gambits, unlike many of today's top athletes. Instead, the earnings came solely from the prizes he won over a 24-year long career. Of the 4,257 four-horse races he competed in, Diocles won 1,462 races and placed in an additional 1,438 races (mostly finishing in second place). The 'champion of charioteers' is one of the best-documented ancient athletes, most likely because he was such a star at the famous Roman Circus Maximus.

Many history students know that the Circus was merely a way for the flagging Empire to pacify the masses of poor and downtrodden people. Contemporaries, too, were aware of the ulterior motives behind the emperor's support of the weekly chariot races. Writing in the first century AD, poet and satirist Juvenal said, "Long ago the people shed their anxieties, ever since we do not sell our votes to anyone. For the people – who once conferred imperium, symbols of office, legions, everything – now hold themselves in check and anxiously desire only two things, the grain dole and chariot races in the Circus."

This situation suited Diocles. "Twenty-four years of winnings brought Diocles – likely an illiterate man whose signature move was the strong final dash – the staggering sum of 35,863,120 sesterces in prize money," wrote Professor Peter Struck, the undergraduate chair of Classical Studies at the University of Chicago, in an article for *Lapham's Quarterly*. "His total take home amounted to five times the earnings of the highest paid provincial governors over a similar period—enough to provide grain for the entire city of Rome for one year, or to pay all the ordinary soldiers of the Roman Army at the height of its imperial reach for a fifth of a year."

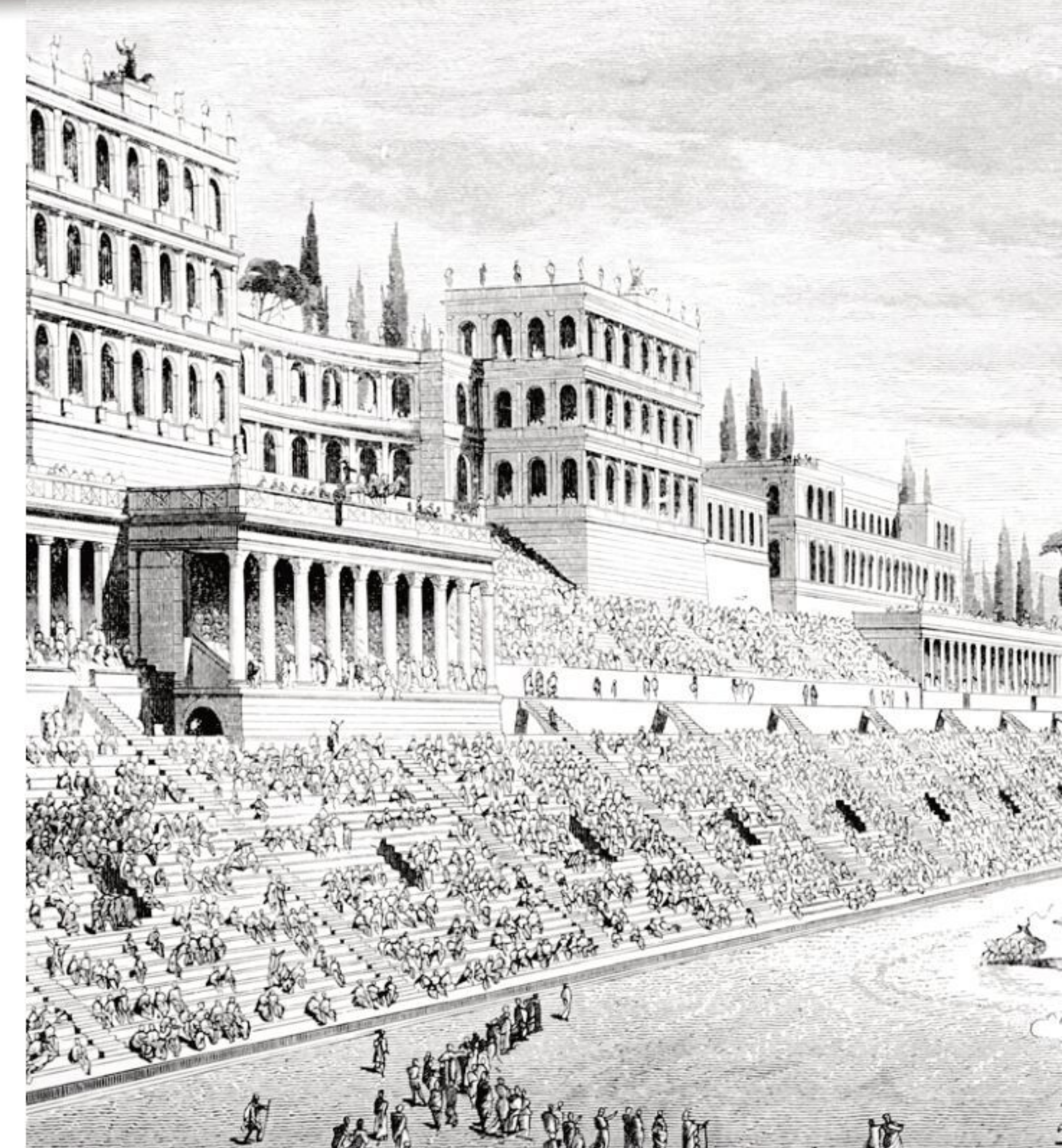
Diocles is famous not only for his obscene wealth but because he lived to retire at the age of 42. Many charioteers died in their mid-twenties. Diocles lucked out. He took his massive earnings and bought an expanse of land in the Italian countryside near the small town of Praeneste (modern-day Palestrina). There, he lived out the remainder of his days in a quiet life of ease. His son and daughter later erected a dedication to his name at the site.



A chariot race in the Circus Maximus.
Below: Victorian engraving of the
Circus Maximus, Rome.

MODERN TOP EARNERS

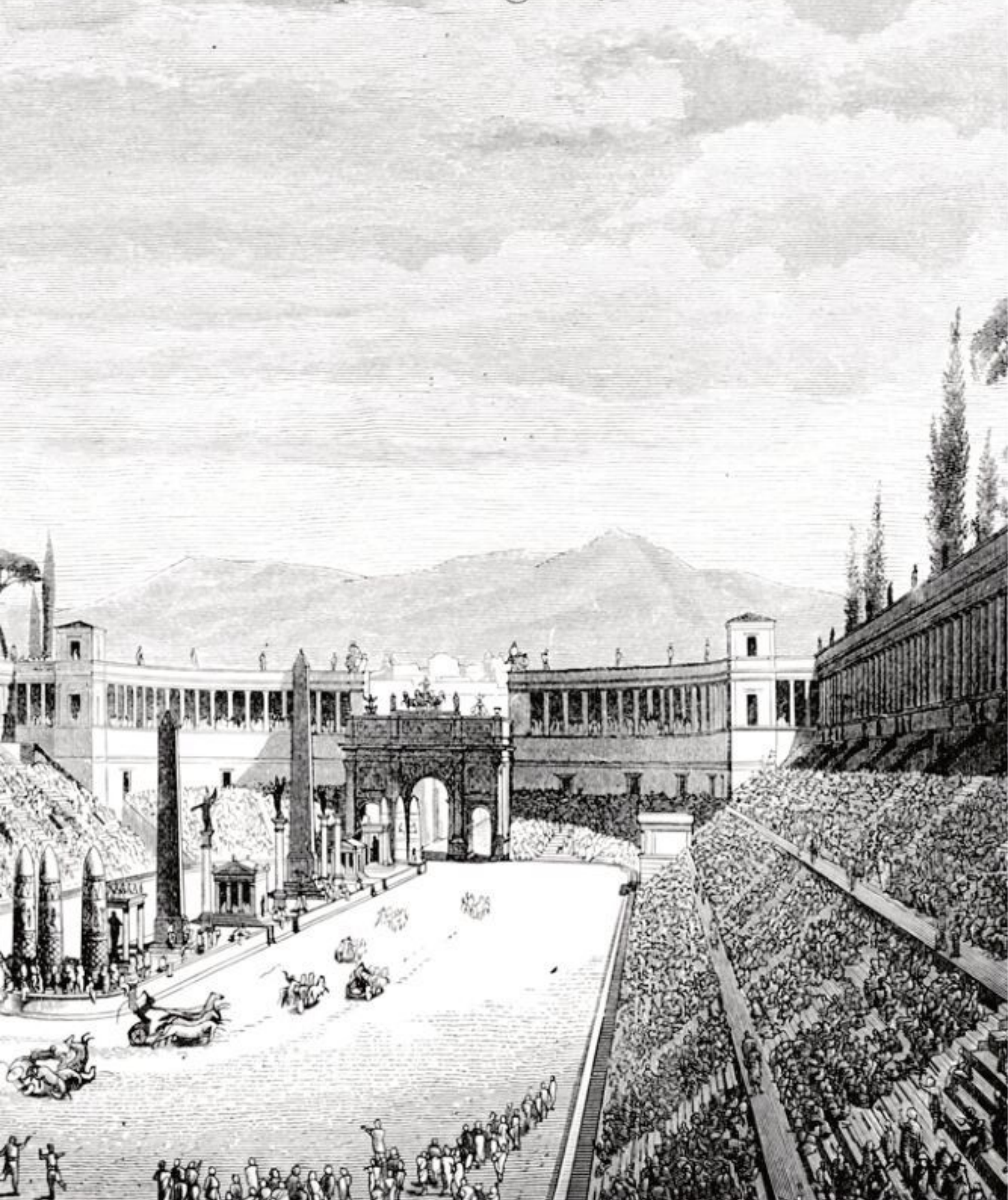
According to *Forbes* Magazine, 50 athletes made nearly \$2.8 billion in the 12-month period from May 2020 to May 2021, up 16% from last year's Top 50 to an all-time high. Just over \$1 billion of that came from endorsement deals and other off-the-field endeavors, the most ever for the Top 50. UFC fighter Conor McGregor lands at No. 1 in the ranking with



Circus Maximus.



antiqueimages / AdobeStock



\$180 million following the sale of his majority stake in Irish whiskey distiller Proper No. Twelve. He topped soccer stars Lionel Messi's \$130 million and Cristiano Ronaldo's \$120 million. Tennis champ Naomi Osaka takes the top spot on the women's side and No. 12 in the ranking overall with \$60 million, crushing the record she set for female athletes just a year ago, when she was No. 29 with \$37.4 million. ■

TARAXIPPUS

THE TERRIFYING HORSE APPARITION AT RACETRACKS IN ANCIENT GREECE

The term *Taraxippus* refers to a spectral apparition, usually the ghost of someone killed by horses, that appeared at racetracks across ancient Greece, such as the hippodrome at Olympia. During a race, it was said to terrify the racehorses. Pausanias described the result: "the fear leads to disorder; the chariots generally crash and the charioteers are injured."

Some people believed that Taraxippus was Ischenus, the son of a giant, a local noble sacrificed to appease the gods and end a famine. Others said the Taraxippus at Olympia was a skilled horseman named Olenius. Alternatively, he was Dameon, a former companion of Heracles. But the most fascinating story comes from the legend of King Oenomaus of Pisa. Was it the spirit of Alcathus, one of Hippodameia's murdered suitors? "Having been unsuccessful on the course, he is a spiteful and hostile deity to chariot-drivers," said Pausanias.

Or could it have been King Oenomaus who died in the spell-bound chariot race between himself and Pelops? A final mystery of the Taraxippus story is that Pelops buried a mysterious object near the hippodrome. He got it from Amphion, one of the original kings of Thebes, and Pausanias claimed "it was the buried thing which frightened the mares of Oenomaus, as well as those of every charioteer since." No-one knows what the object was, but recently archaeologists found a copper statue of Hippodameia buried at the hippodrome.



Exploring the Brutal History of Hair-Raising Ancient Sports

|| By Cecilia Bogaard



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As we all struggle through the current health crisis, there's a renewed interest in discovering alternative ideas for exercise. Meanwhile, adrenaline seekers continue to push the boundaries, with an ever-growing range of exciting activities such as parkour, volcano boarding, snowboarding, or even crocodile bungee jumping. This obsession with danger is by no means new. Below you'll find some of the most terrifying ancient sports, and while they are definitely unique, we wouldn't recommend trying them out at home!



Playing kokpar by Franz Roubaud.

BUZKASHI GOAT GRABBING IN AFGHANISTAN

Described in *The Guardian* as being “like blood-drenched polo, with a headless goat as the ball,” *buzkashi* is a sport which is played on the steppes of Central Asia. The national sport of Afghanistan, it is an ancient nomadic game also known as *kokpar* and is still played in Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan.

While no one is quite sure of the origins, local legends claim it originated with Genghis Khan in the 13th century. Usually associated with weddings and birth celebrations, in the past it was a sport which took place



Kokpar.

between villages and the field of play was the distance between two nomadic encampments.

The aim is to carry the body of a headless dead goat, or calf, over a set goal while opponents do everything in their power to prevent this. Armed with whips, which players carry in their mouths, it's bloody and violent, with participants, horses, and spectators regularly getting trampled, maimed, and killed.

These days it's been professionalized and is financed by wealthy horse owners, who

use it to provide free public entertainment, a sure way of improving their social standing.

It's bloody and violent, with participants, horses, and spectators regularly getting trampled, maimed, and killed.

In Afghanistan, the main matches take place after Friday prayers during the winter. The former Taliban regime banned the sport in Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, deeming it immoral. With their current resurgence they

are renewing their efforts, using bombings and assassinations to stop the traditional sporting event, making it a dangerous sport on and off the field.



PUCARA IN SOUTHERN ECUADOR

Pucara, also known as *shitanacuy*, was an indigenous game which took place in the provinces of Azuay and Cañar in southern Ecuador up until the 1980s. Described as a form of ritual combat, it took place as part of the Carnival festivities in February or March each year. Players protected themselves by wearing a huge leather hat, known as a *cobijón*, which was almost 4 feet wide. They also wore several layers of clothing, and drank inordinate amounts of *chicha*, a traditional fermented beverage, for courage.

In *pucara* there were two rival teams who used *hondas*, a kind of slingshot, to launch stones, bones, or other objects at their opponents. If someone was knocked to the ground in the process, their foe would take their *cobijón* and *hondas* and keep them as trophies. Any blood spilled was seen as a sacrifice to the Earth and necessary to provide a good harvest to the winning team. Said to have pre-Columbian origins, the sporting event survived into modern times, particularly in areas with few resources and local conflicts, according to the Cuenca-based historian Juan Martínez Borrero.

Rival teams used *hondas*, a kind of slingshot, to launch stones, bones, or other objects at their opponents.





Calcio match in Piazza Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Painting by Jan Van der Straet.

CALCIO STORICO IN FLORENCE, ITALY

This classic goal sport, also known as *calcio fiorentino*, dates back to the 16th century. The idea is pretty simple: defend your goal and invade that of your opponent to score. In this case however, there is a twist. The participants, 27 men on each side, fight tooth and nail for 50 minutes struggling to get the ball into the net. Apparently bulls are sometimes added into the mix to provide additional entertainment.

The perplexing thing is that it's still taking place today. In June every year, three games take place in the Piazza Santa Croce of Florence, in the shadow of the Basilica of Santa Croce and under the, probably disapproving, gaze of the famous Dante statue.

The event was revived in 1930 and is immensely popular, with four local teams competing for the glory of becoming the champions.

Tackling, tripping, choking, punching, head-butting, kicking, and wrestling are all allowed as the participants enter the fray in a sporting event which at times resembles a violent brawl. Only one player can attack an opponent at a time though. According to *National Geographic*, "men routinely leave the field with bloody faces and broken limbs, sometimes with bones protruding from their skin."



Calcio storico. Left: Calcio storico in costume, Firenze.



Masyanya/AdobeStock

HE'E HOLUA LAVA SLEDDING IN HAWAII

Can you imagine careering headfirst down the side of a volcano along hardened lava slides on a narrow sled? Me neither, but that's exactly what members of the *Ali'i* ruling class in Hawaii did in the hair-raising ancient competitive sport known as *he'e holua*. Reaching speeds of up to 50 miles per hour, it's a dangerous activity which can lead to serious injury or death.

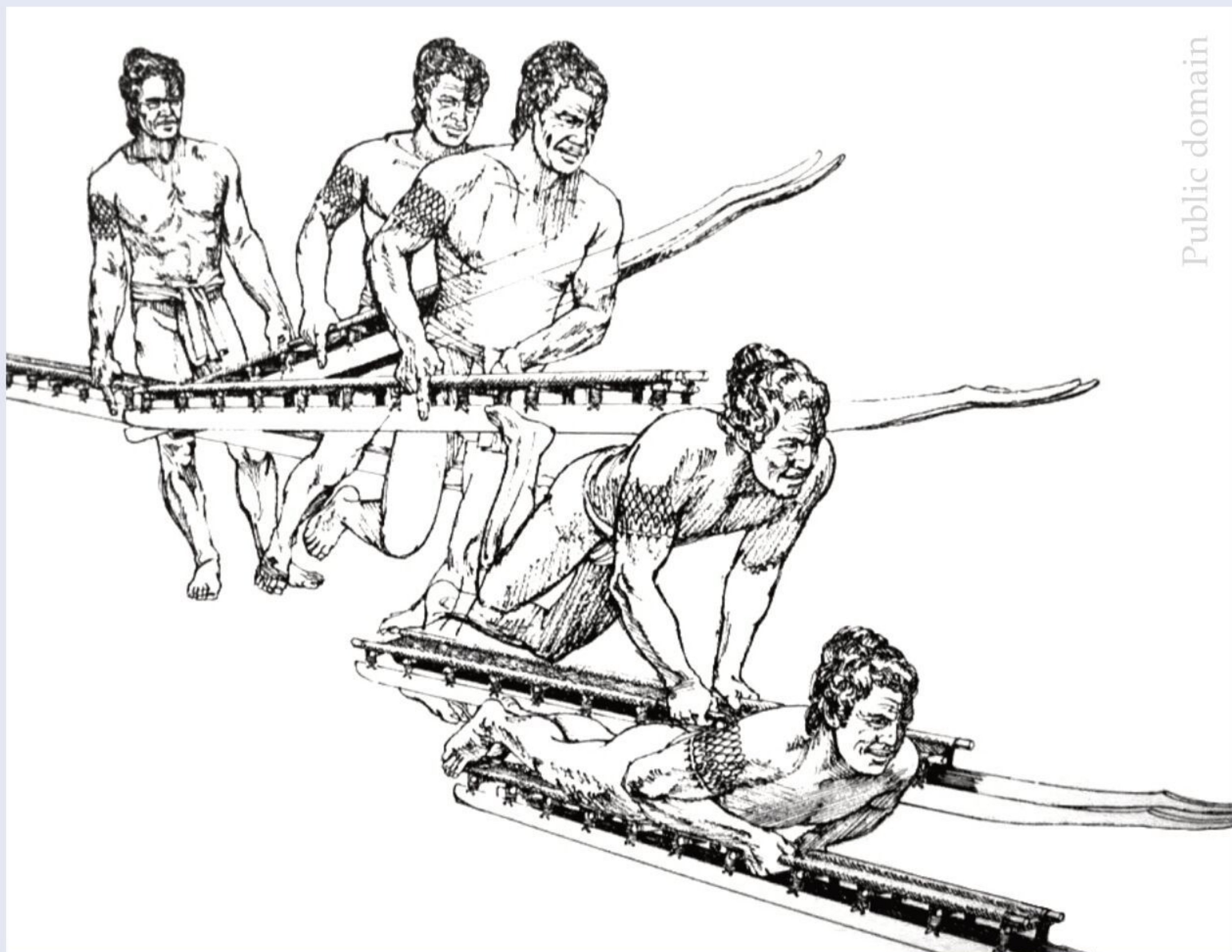
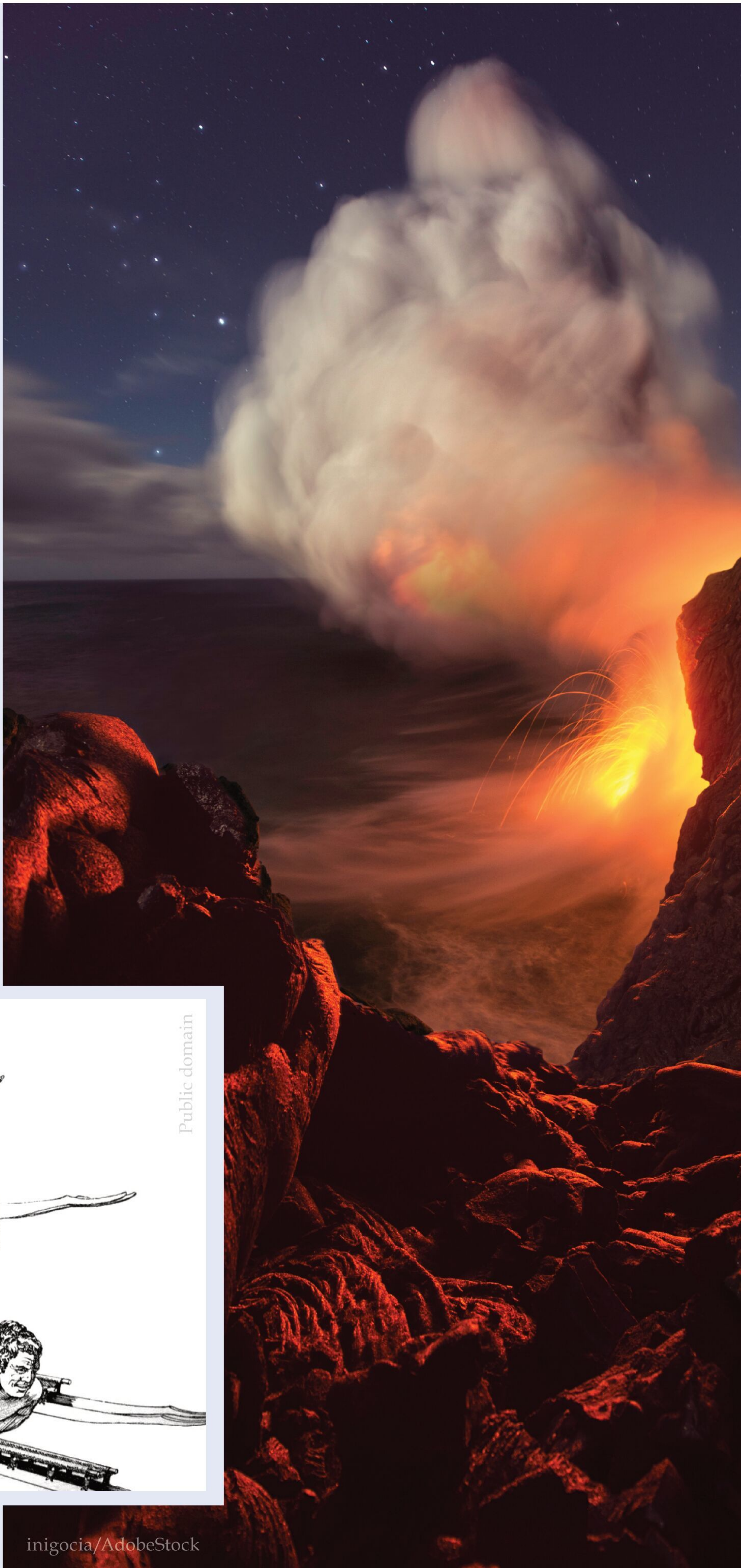
He'e holua isn't just an extreme sport though. Performed by both men and women, throughout history it had deep religious meaning for the people of Hawaii and was connected to the worship of Pele, the goddess of fire and volcanoes.



He'e Holua
Lava Sledding
training session
in Hawaii. ©
Anne Stone

The *holua* slides discovered to date were all built near *heiau* temples. “At the same time we feared her wrath we also worshiped her or at times challenged her by riding down the the steep hardened lava slopes to prove we could overcome her anger,” highlighted Tom “Pohaku” Stone, a surfer who is working to revive the ancient sport, in *National Geographic*.

As with many aspects of traditional Hawaiian culture, the British missionaries discouraged this sport due to its pagan origins, deeming it both dangerous and unproductive. The practice, which had survived over 1,000 years (it’s hard to know for sure due to a lack of written records), came to an end in 1825. Having heard stories from his grandfather, Stone has been working since 1993 to bring the practice of he’e holua back to life. He has since found dozens of holua courses varying from 200 feet to 4 miles long, and by 2011 he claimed there were about 100 active riders.



Public domain

The launch form of He'e Holua.



Painting of Naumachia by Giovanni Lanfranco.

NAUMACHIA IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The Romans are famous for their thirst for entertainment involving extreme cruelty. *Naumachiae* were mock naval battles which took place on lakes or even within the Roman Colosseum, which was supposedly filled with water for the purpose. The performers were usually convicts and criminals who had been sentenced to death, and they were accompanied by stunning backdrops and battleships. The aim of this blood sport was for participants to re-enact battle scenes and beat their opponents, providing an enthralling and blood-curdling show for the spectators. With thousands of prisoners playing their part, there were also thousands of casualties. The events were huge propaganda spectacles to prove the military and engineering might of the empire. The first recorded Naumachia event was performed for Julius Caesar in 46 BC, and due to the huge production and expense required there were few performed after this. The scale of these battles is hard to imagine. One memorable Naumachia staged by Emperor Claudius involved over a hundred boats and 19,000 participants were forced to fight.



The naumachia of Nero.



FISHERMAN JOUSTING IN EGYPT

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Detail from Ny-ankh-nesuwt tomb relief, Saqqara.

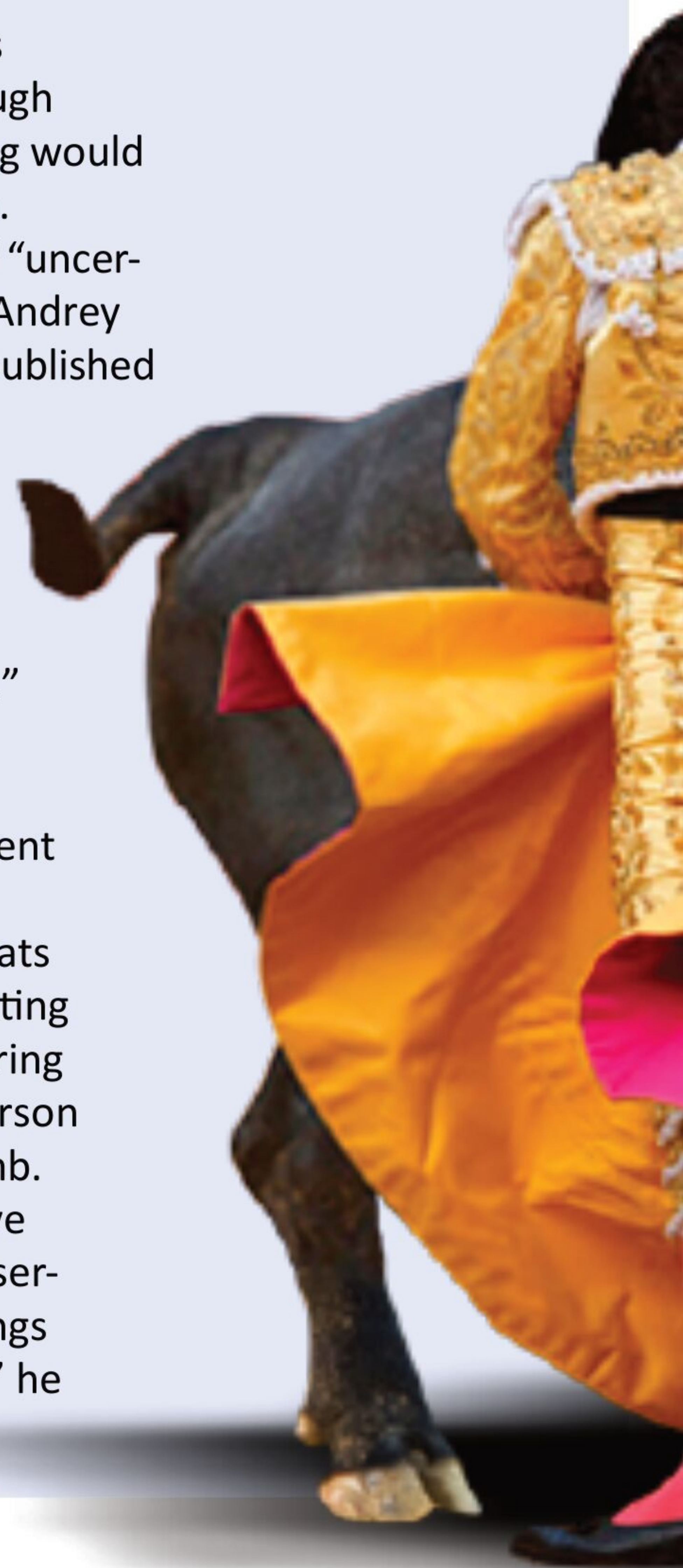
One unexpected addition to this list of brutal sports is that of fisherman jousting. While it may sound serene, this was actually a rather violent sport enjoyed by lower-class fishermen on the Nile. The rules were pretty simple. Two teams would face each other on papyrus boats using punting poles to stab and knock the opposing team into the water. The death toll was said to be high. Not only could the blows be deadly, but if the combatants didn't drown, the legendary presence of hippos and crocodiles in the waters of the Nile would probably finish them off. What we know about so-called boatmen jousting comes from tomb murals of the Old Kingdom dating back over 4,000 years, and there are different interpretations as to what they are depicting. Some historians have argued

Not only could the blows be deadly, but if the combatants didn't drown, the legendary presence of hippos and crocodiles in the waters of the Nile would probably finish them off.

that these were actually battles related to fishing territory, though others argue that water jousting would be a more accurate description. The events in the murals are of "uncertain significance" according to Andrey O. Bolshakov in a 1993 article published

in *Société D'Égyptologie*, who questions the "meaning of the scene of scuffling boatmen." In his analysis of almost 40 similar scenes from different tombs, Bolshakov argues that the boats are racing and fighting to be the first to bring offerings to the person interred in the tomb.

"The fighting scene had to prove that the deceased had fervent servants hurrying to deliver offerings regardless of their own health," he concludes.





fresnel6 / Adobe Stock

BULLFIGHTING IN SPAIN

In keeping with a long line of blood sports which have entertained humans throughout history, bullfighting joins the ranks of the likes of the Roman *venatio*, gladiator games, and other blood-thirsty spectacles such as fox tossing, cockfighting, dog fighting, and bear baiting. While most of these are now illegal, bullfighting lingers on in some parts of the world.

Bullfighting has a long history, with depictions recorded from far flung locations such as Mesopotamia and Iran. Fighting bulls on foot however seems to have started with Francisco Romero in Ronda, Spain in the 1700s, which then

paved the way for the modern *corrida de toros* within the now famous bullrings which dot the landscape in Spain. These ritualized events are a choreographed dance with well-defined steps. Bullfights are nevertheless terrifying experiences for the bull, being that they are in essence an unequal battle in which the bull is angered, wounded, worn down, and almost always killed. The bullfighters don't get away unscathed, as a "safe" bullfight wouldn't be much of a show, and the bull sometimes manages to gore his persecutor. Although deemed an important aspect of Spain's cultural heritage (due to a 2013 vote in Spanish Congress), in 2020 UNESCO refused to include bullfighting on its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. It is still legal in some countries, including Spain, Portugal, Southern France, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru.





CHEESE-ROLLING IN GLOUCESTER, ENGLAND

Dave Farrance / CC BY-SA 3.0

Cooper's Hill Cheese Rolling in 2013.

Believe it or not, but cheese-rolling is actually a thing. Featured on the Netflix documentary *We are the Champions*, the race takes place in southern

England in May each year at Cooper's Hill in Gloucestershire, and it wins the prize for the strangest sports event we've heard of. Odd as it sounds, participants launch themselves down the nearly vertical hill in pursuit of, wait for it, a large 7-pound Double Gloucester cheese.

Odd as it sounds, participants launch themselves down the nearly vertical hill in pursuit of, wait for it, a large 7-pound Double Gloucester cheese.

Aficionados of the event claim that the local tradition started with either the Phoenicians or the Romans. Meanwhile the first

archival mention dates back to 1826, though locals think it is far older. Explanations for the tradition range from a rite of passage, to being related to maintaining grazing rights on

the common, while others think it's linked to pagan rituals during the New Year.

During several races, divided into men, women, and children, the contestants hurtle down the 600-foot hill in the hope of being the first to reach the bottom and win the cheese. Several injuries and broken bones are sustained every year during the contest which attracts people from all over the world. *The Sun* reported that the police banned the local farmer Diana Smart of Smarts Gloucester Cheese from providing cheese in the hope of quenching its popularity, but to no avail. If you'd like to learn more about this curious event, there's even a book, aptly titled *Cheese-Rolling in Gloucester*.



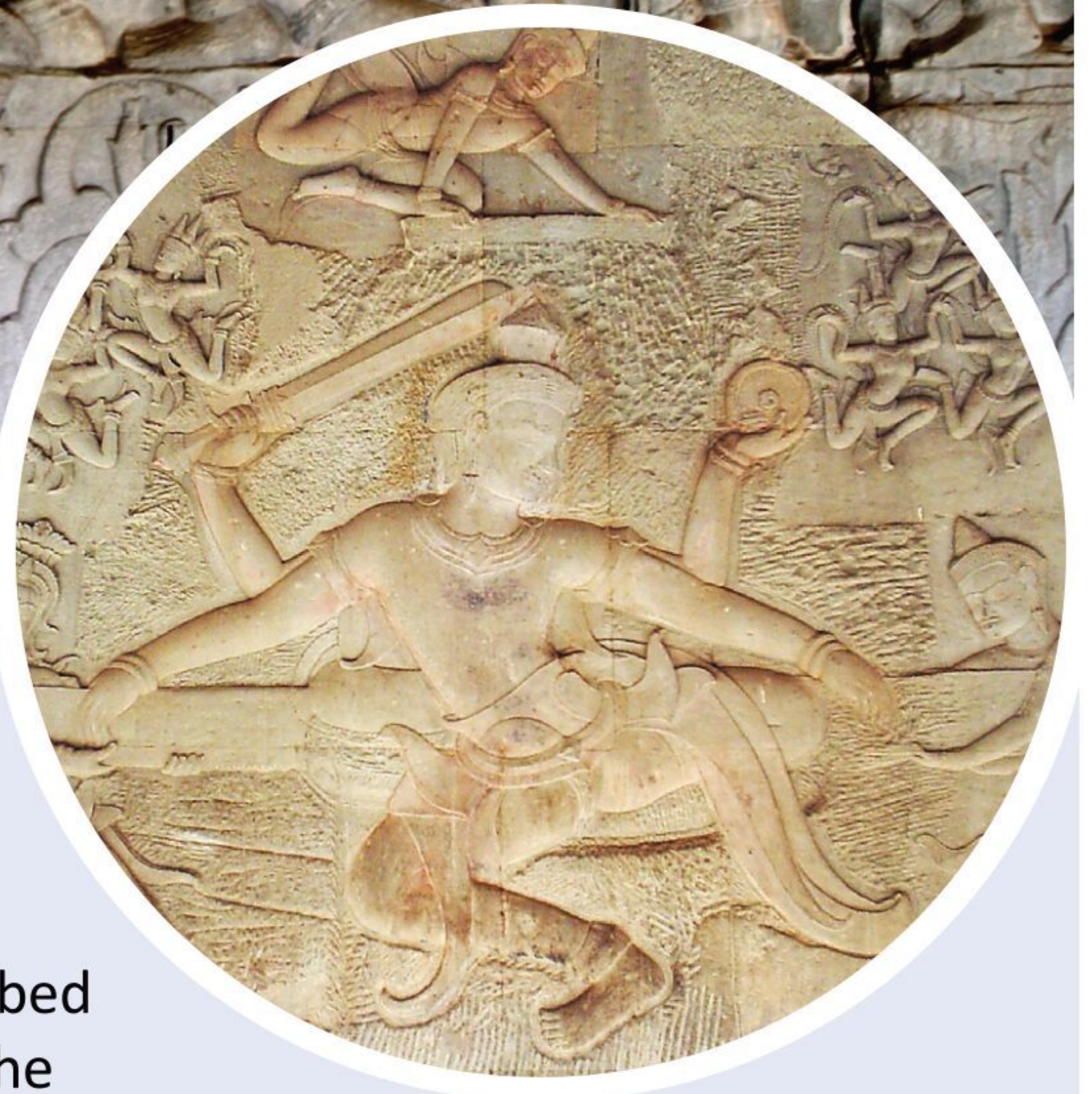
A frieze in Angkor Wat depicts Hindu deities tugging a serpent to churn the ocean of milk.

VIKING SKIN PULLING TUG-OF-WAR

Tug-of-war is today remembered as a children's game. So it may surprise you to know that not only has it been considered a competitive sport but it also has enjoyed some spine-chilling applications in history. The first evidence of a tug-of-war is carved into the walls at Angkor Wat in Cambodia where it remains a popular pastime. So much so that since 2015 it has even been protected as Intangible Cultural Heritage. According to UNESCO "the intentionally uncompetitive nature of the event removes the emphasis on winning or losing, affirming that these traditions are performed to promote the well-being of the community." There is also evidence of tug-of-war activities from Egypt, China, and India.

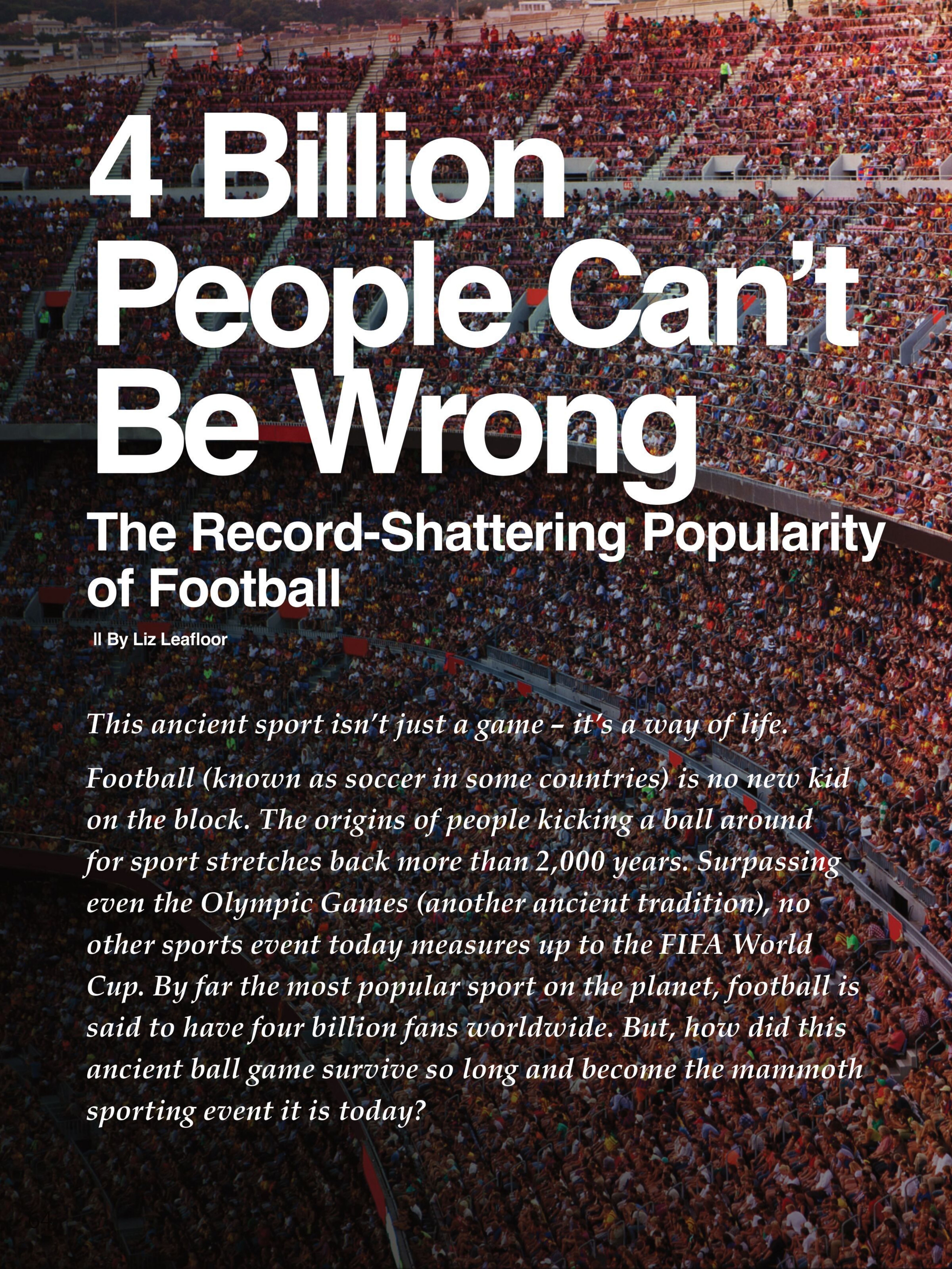
Scandinavia wasn't the originator of this sport, and their version certainly can't be described as "uncompetitive." In the Viking version, warriors would create a "rope" made of animal skins which would be stretched out over an open fire pit. The losing team would invariably fall into the fire, while legend has it that the winners could take their pick of the spoils of the recently attacked settlement. This included defiling their choice of women.

Tug-of-war was included as a competitive sport during the Summer Olympics in 1900 as part of the track and field games, though this ended after the 1920 Olympics. While it can appear innocuous, it is actually



The Churning of the Ocean of Milk, depicted in bas-relief on the south of the east wall of Angkor Wat's third enclosure. Markalexander100 / CC BY-SA 3.0

a dangerous sport, even without the participation of Vikings. According to *CBS News*, it can lead to unexpected amputations, injuries, and even death, if not played correctly. In 1995, a group of 650 Boy Scouts in Germany attempting to set a Guinness World Record used the wrong kind of rope and inadvertently caused two deaths and over a hundred serious injuries. ■



4 Billion People Can't Be Wrong

The Record-Shattering Popularity of Football

|| By Liz Leafloor

This ancient sport isn't just a game – it's a way of life.

Football (known as soccer in some countries) is no new kid on the block. The origins of people kicking a ball around for sport stretches back more than 2,000 years. Surpassing even the Olympic Games (another ancient tradition), no other sports event today measures up to the FIFA World Cup. By far the most popular sport on the planet, football is said to have four billion fans worldwide. But, how did this ancient ball game survive so long and become the mammoth sporting event it is today?



SURPRISE! FOOTBALL DIDN'T REALLY KICK OFF IN ENGLAND

Association Football (the “assoc” is where the term “soccer” comes from) is clearly a game that has grown out of a long tradition of ball games from around the globe. Many cultures had foot-and-ball games dating back to prehistoric times; *Pahsaherman* was played by Native Americans, the Moari’s had *Ki-o-rahi*, and the Indigenous Australians had *Marn Grook*. Mesoamericans famously played the dangerous and deadly ballgame now called Ulama.

China claims the earliest recorded football game, dating to the Warring States period (476 BC – 221 BC). *Cuju* (kickball), was a competitive foot and ball sport involving kicking a ball into a net. Like today, hands were not allowed to touch the ball. This ball was initially a skin filled with feathers to keep it light,

China claims the earliest recorded football game, dating to the Warring States period.

but by the Tang Dynasty the ball was air-filled. It is said the net was hung 30 feet off the ground.

Just like footballers today, using

just the feet to control a ball while running, passing, and scoring shows great physical skill. This is perhaps why the earliest mention of cuju was in an exercise from a military manual from the third century BC. The game was actually a form of fitness training and as such was intense and violent. Eventually the popularity of the sport moved to the upper classes and royal courts, and it was played for entertainment in wealthy cities. *Cuju* matches were often held inside the imperial palace.

Soldiers who belonged to the imperial army and Gold Bird Guard often formed cuju teams for the delight of the emperor and his court. The level of female cuju teams also improved. Records indicate that once a 17-year-old girl beat a team of army soldiers. Cuju even became popular among the scholars and intellectuals, and if a courtier lacked skill in the game, he could pardon himself by acting as a scorekeeper.



Emperor Taizu of Song playing cuju with Prime Minister Zhao Pu, by the Yuan-era painter Qian Xuan (1235–1305).

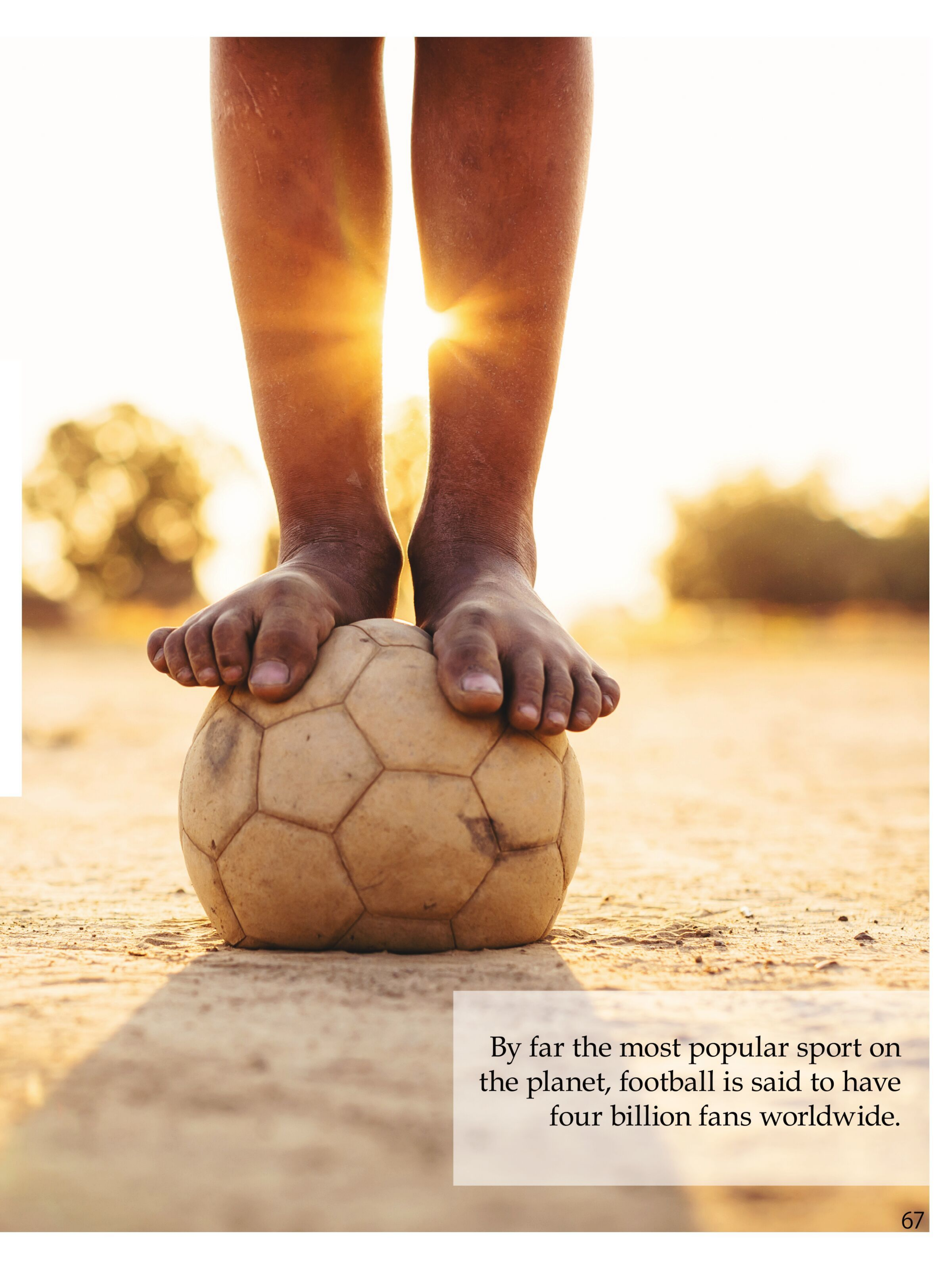
SKILLS AND FANCY FOOTWORK

Cuju in different forms was played in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. The Japanese version, known as *kemari*, was a kickball game introduced into Japan by China at some point of time prior to 644 AD. One of the earliest references to this game can be found in the ‘*Nihon Shoki*,’ the second oldest book of classical Japanese history.

It was the upper classes in Japan who first played kemari, and they regarded it as a refined game of skill and grace. The competitive and violent aspects were stripped away, and the goal of the game was to work together with the other

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nateejindakum/AdobeStock



By far the most popular sport on the planet, football is said to have four billion fans worldwide.

Because only a ball and feet are really required to play, it was an inexpensive, enjoyable game that all classes, rich or poor, could play, making it the perfect fit as a “viral” game.

players to use their feet to keep the ball in the air without letting it touch the ground. Nowadays, such skillful techniques and footwork to keep the ball in the air and away from the opposing team is still a fun part of the sport. Modern-day players such as Leo Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Megan Rapinoe, and Alex Morgan have become world-renowned and masterful players thanks to their precise footwork.

THE GREEK EPISKYROS

A famous ancient Greek ball game, *Episkyros*, is often linked with football/soccer because of a portrayal on a vase displayed at the National Archaeological Museum, Athens; but its true part in the sport’s story are less clear.

Episkyros focused on teamwork, where two teams of 12 to 14 players each faced off with one ball. Unlike football, hands could be used to throw or receive the ball. They’d throw the ball until one of the teams was forced behind a line on the ground at their own end. It was known to

be extremely violent, and to modern eyes might have looked more like American football or rugby rather than soccer.

The Romans took the concept and ran with it, naming their version *harpastum*, from the word *harpazein* which translates as “to snatch”. While little remains to tell us about the rules of the game,



The Greek ball game known as Episkyros on a lekythos vase from around 400 to 375 BC.



historians believe that it too was a violent game. “This exercise is a very heavy, vigorous one, involving much use of the hold by the neck, and many wrestling holds,” explained Galen when describing the Roman version of the sport.

MODERN FOOTBALL

The contemporary organized sport known today as football began in the middle of the 19th century in England. Football clubs have existed since the 15th



Diego maradona
/Pngwing.com

Public domain

A football game between Thames and Townsend clubs, played at Kingston upon Thames in London, 1846.

century, but they were unorganized and without official status. A foot-and-ball game was played by large groups of people by kicking a pig's bladder through the streets from one landmark to another. Such activities became a nuisance and were even banned at some points.

Some historians believe England (Sheffield) and Scotland (Edinburgh) were the first to have teams play against each other in the 1800s. England's vigorous Empire trade with other nations spread football far and wide, explains author John Doyle in his book *'The World is a Ball.'* Because only a ball and feet are really required to play, it was an inexpensive, enjoyable game that all classes, rich or poor, could play, making it the perfect fit as a "viral" game. So even though the British Empire went into decline,

Depiction of the dangerous and deadly Aztec ballgame known as Ulama.



Men's Olympic Football has a longer history than the FIFA World Cup: it's been played at every Games since Paris 1900, except in Los Angeles 1932. The women's competition was added at the Atlanta 1996 Games.



People playing kemari in Japan.



Mesoamerican ballgame player discovered at Teotihuacan.



Painting showing Chinese children playing early football, known as cuju, circa 1130-1160s AD.

football gained in popularity, and countries developed their own versions.

Today, the world's governing body of football, the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) includes 211 national associations, and every four years they compete in the month-long World Cup, held in different locations around the world.

For many countries, football isn't just a game – it's a way of life. Children as young as three years old are trained to play (competitively or just as recreation), and it can be a lifelong activity. It is the number one sports event, and one of the highest paying competitions in the sports world, turning players such as Maradona, Pelé, Lev Yashin, Johan Cruyff, Marta Vieira da Silva, Zidane, and Bobby Charlton into international superstars. Is football the most enduring of ancient sports? Four billion lovers of the game think it's a winner.■



The Olympic Flame



The Olympic flame connects the ancient and modern Olympics. It represents positive values associated with fire, such as life, rationalism, inventiveness, and freedom, and has been linked to the myth of Prometheus, who stole fire from Zeus and bestowed it upon humanity.

Months before the Olympic Games, the flame is lit at Olympia, Greece. This reflects the lighting of the ancient "ageless flame" that used to burn on the Altar of Prytaneion throughout the ancient Olympics. The modern ritual begins with a procession of priestesses dressed in ancient Greek clothing. At the Altar of Hera, the High Priestess calls on the Sun God Apollo to light a torch

using a concave mirror to focus the sun's rays. When the flame lights, she transfers it to a small ceramic pot and takes it and the priestesses to the Panathinaiko Stadium. This starts the Olympic torch relay, which ends with the lighting of the Olympic cauldron at the opening ceremony of the Olympics. The flame burns in the cauldron throughout the Games, until it is extinguished at the closing ceremony.

The Olympic flame wasn't included in the modern games until 1928 in Amsterdam and the torch relay was only introduced in 1936 for the Olympics in Berlin – possibly as Third Reich propaganda. A torch relay was not part of the ancient Olympics, however some ancient Greek cities held torch races to honor certain gods, such as Prometheus.

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Onam Kathakali Performance

The Hindi festival of Onam celebrating the harvest includes Kathakali, a harmonious blend of five forms of art namely, Sahithyam (literature), Sangeetham (music), Chithram (painting), Natyam (acting) and Nritham (dance). Performers only use hand gestures, body movements, and facial expressions as a means of communication, and are trained in controlling minuscule muscles of eyeballs, eyebrows, eyelids, lips, neck, and shoulders, to perfection. The make-up of each character can take up to eight to 10 hours to apply, with specific colors denoted, for example green signifies a noble or a divine character, such as that of Lord Rama. The elaborate headgear is made from light wood and decorated with mirrors, colorful stones, and pieces of shiny metal plates.







Rediscovering the Spiritual Signi

Hawaiian

ficance of

Surfing

Interview with Tom "Pohaku" Stone

||By Cecilia Bogaard

As the world spirals out of control during the angst of the coronavirus pandemic, I caught up with Tom "Pohaku" Stone at his base camp on O'ahu, Hawaii. To the relaxing backdrop of wind chimes, we discussed ancient gods, the importance of women in Hawaiian culture, and the sacred significance of surfing. A champion of the art and spiritual practice of traditional surfing, Stone combined his family history and passion for the ocean with a master's degree in ancient Hawaiian sports. Now he dedicates his life to educating others about Hawaiian surfing, handcrafting traditional wooden surfboards, and has even been credited with reviving the lost culture of *he'e holua* mountain surfing.

CB: What came first, surfing in the ocean (*he'e nalu*) or mountain surfing (*he'e holua*) in Hawaii?

TS: Based on my research, I personally believe that surfing on the mountain came first. We're ocean people, so when we left the Asian continent thousands of years ago, we actually began riding waves on canoes. But to make the canoes, we had to get the great trees from the mountains to the ocean. So the sled, or *papa hōlua* as we've come to know it today, was actually a tool to move the logs from the mountains to the seashore.

CB: Are there many archaeological remains of surfing in Hawaii from its ancient history?

TS: There are not as many archaeological remains related to surfing as there should be because most of it was eliminated by religious colonialism when Western religion swept through our islands. These particular practices were more focused on our female gods and women. Because the Western world at that time felt that women shouldn't hold that kind of status, they kept all the things that recognized the male gods and systematically eradicated the knowledge and the importance of the female.

CB: Where do you find information about the ancient history of *he'e nalu* (surfing) and *he'e holua* (mountain surfing)?

TS: For my research in the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa I

looked at various bits and pieces of information from all the islands that no one had linked together before. I realized that all these places that were constructed to ride down these great mountains and cliff sides were actually connected to *heiau* or sites of worship. Western archaeology had incorrectly separated them and made them two components.

When we researched the names they were all related to Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of volcanoes who created the islands. All the names of these religious sites, places for riding mountains and for surfing were connected to this one female, which means that

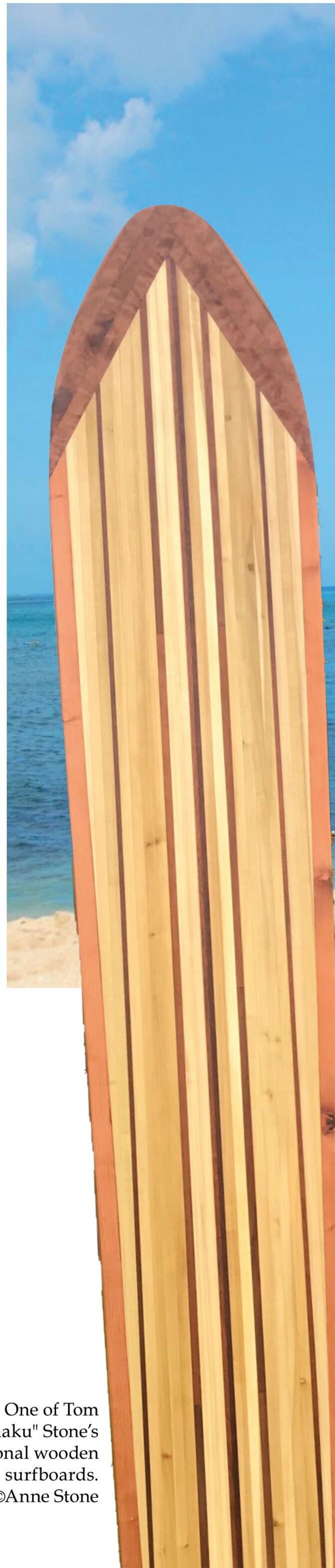
the men praised and worshiped the female gods here.

CB: Has this research been accepted in Hawaii?

TS: It's coming around. More importantly my practice and my work academically shed a light on the fact that we were

overlooking the significance and contributions through the ages of women to our traditional practices and culture. And so it's leapfrogged into other components that make up our entire culture. It's like yin and yang. Men and male gods had their roles, but you have to have the two components to make the culture work. A lot of studies today by our younger generations are focusing on how Western archaeology eliminated the importance of females in our culture, except for producing children.

"There are not as many archaeological remains related to surfing as there should be because most of it was eliminated by religious colonialism."



One of Tom "Pohaku" Stone's traditional wooden surfboards.
©Anne Stone



CB: What is the spiritual significance of surfing?

TS: Surfing connects us to home. Ocean is home. Ocean is mother. Ocean is life. Especially for island people. We worship the *Papahānaumoku* (Earth Mother) and Sky Father, but without surfing we wouldn't have learnt to cross the oceans on the largest body of water on this planet. Without the waves we wouldn't



A papa hōlua sled. ©Anne Stone

be ocean people today. We'd be like everyone else. Land people. Spiritually it rejuvenates me every time.

CB: Are people still aware of this spiritual connection today when they surf?

TS: No, they are not. People are surfing, though I don't understand why. I guess it's a thrill. That was the downside to the COVID year 2020.

Across the world, thousands of people began to surf, in Hawaii especially. The only thing that anyone could do was go into the ocean.



Carrying *papa hōlua* sleds up a hill. ©Anne Stone



Tom "Pohaku" Stone and a *papa hōlua* sled. ©Anne Stone



You couldn't sit on the beaches, you couldn't have family gatherings, but you could surf. If they had said you couldn't go surfing there would have been a native uprising!

I surf on a lot of different islands and I don't believe that the majority of people surfing today have any spiritual connection to surfing at all. They're just doing it for fun. There's no sharing of *aloha*. That's gone. There's an etiquette when you're in the ocean. Now it's like living in NY City where nobody cares for each other.

CB: Where, or from whom, did you learn how to make the surfboards you are now famous for?

TS: My earliest recollection was my dad. Even though we were poor, I was a very spoiled young boy who could have anything he wanted. I always loved to surf and being in the ocean,

and I wanted a pretty, shiny board that all my non-native friends were getting. My dad found a piece of wood and every day he came home and worked on it by hand. I was there every moment watching him make this board. But when he finished it I told him I hated it.

As an adult I wanted to make it clear that I appreciated what he had done. He taught me what it was like to make a board and what type of board he was making, even though I was a 6-year-old kid who just wanted that big, shiny, fiberglass board in the store that took every penny that he had. In college I realized how important it was and it became the focus of my academic research which was based on what my dad, my uncles, and my grandfather taught me about mountain sledding.

CB: How are the methods and designs passed down?

TS: The weird thing is that they were not recorded.



Surfing / Hugh Gentry

"Surfing connects us to home.
Ocean is home.
Ocean is mother.
Ocean is life."

I don't understand how Westerners who wrote about Hawaii in the late 1700s and early 1800s didn't write these things down. My assumption is that they were focused on conversion to Christianity. They only wanted to record the things that were negative to Christianity and nothing else mattered.

I was lucky that my uncles, my dad, and my mother took the time to talk to me about these things, such as about all the different types of surfboards. Most people think that there are just two kinds of traditional surfboard, the *Alaia* and the *Olo*. I know of 10 different types of traditional surfboard, and there could be more. Every surfboard we make today out of fiberglass is based on the traditional surfboards that came out of Hawaii.

When it came to mountain surfing, *he'e holua*, nobody cared about it. It was almost extinct. Apart from a few of my elders, nobody knew



Photo / David Pu'u

Surfing with a traditional wooden surfboard.

anything about *he'e holua*. I picked it up when I had a dream in which my grandfather told me about this practice. When I constructed my first *papa hōlua* sled in early 1994, people had never seen or heard of one. There was one in a museum, but it wasn't anything of significance.

CB: Why is it important to maintain and remember the tradition of handcrafting surfboards?

TS: The Hawaiian Islands were colonized and our nation was taken from us, so it is important for us to maintain our culture and not get assimilated. If capitalism were to end one day, then people wouldn't know how to survive. We're so reliant on production. If there were no more modern surfboards and no more food, what would we do? To me and my family it's important to have this cultural knowledge and these traditions to make us self-sufficient. Neither myself or my sons need to buy a surfboard. We can make them.

CB: In one of your interviews, you mention that every piece of wood speaks to you and tells you the type of board it is going to become. Can you tell me what you mean by this?

TS: I believe in my 400,000 gods who make up everything these islands have given me. A tree is a living spirit, so when it's cut down, it doesn't die. It gets transformed in my hands and that's the spiritual connection. It's usually through dreams that a piece of wood tells me what type of surfboard it's going to become. It's the way we should look at ourselves: we don't really die we just shape change. Everything that grows from this planet is connected to us. There's no death, there's just a return to a different life.

CB: How do your traditional handcrafted surfboards compare with modern fiberglass surfboards? Do they feel or work differently?

TS: If you were a really great surfer in the contemporary sense and you got on a traditional board, you'd find it hard to ride. It makes me realize the expertise it took for my *kupuna's* (ancestors) to actually ride a wave on one of these boards. Contemporary-style surfboards have simplified surfing, so you don't have to connect to that energy or that movement of the wave. But on a traditional surfboard you have to know and feel the way the waves and the water move to make that board work. It makes a huge difference. People think they can just get on that board and ride it, but you can't.

CB: Who buys your traditional wooden surfboards, or do you only create them for certain people?

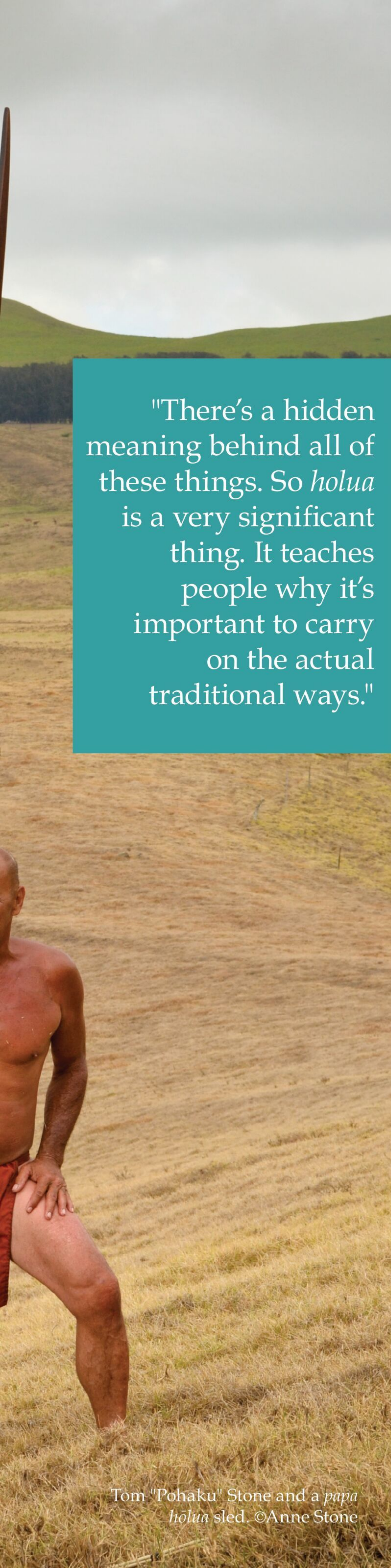
TS: I do get commissions for various individuals and museums that want to carry them, such as the Smithsonian, or museums and exhibitions in California and Australia. We have a non-profit called *Kanalu*, meaning wave, dedicated to Hawaiian cultural studies and ocean preservation, and we survive by creating our own money to provide cultural education.

Depending on the kind of wood, my boards can be very very expensive, or they can be very free, especially for children. That's how I pass on the knowledge. If they come over and want to learn something, I'll usually give it to them when I'm done. That way they learn the value of not owning the thing they made or helped me make, but the idea of *aloha*, of the spirit of giving without trying to take or get something in return. I made a commitment to my elders that I would always give back to our youth.

CB: Have you managed to revive the ancient art of *he'e holua* (mountain surfing)?

TS: I'm very cautious because I don't want *he'e holua* to become a product





"There's a hidden meaning behind all of these things. So *holua* is a very significant thing. It teaches people why it's important to carry on the actual traditional ways."

Tom "Pohaku" Stone and a *papa hōlua* sled. ©Anne Stone



Traditional wooden surfboards. ©Anne Stone

which eliminates the history and knowledge that come with it. Over the past 30 years I have taught people as part of a project put together by our elders which brought the practitioners together to teach the younger generations our cultural knowledge. But along the way we've noticed that they've begun to lose sight of the origins because they misunderstood what the *holua* was all about.

Holua means "to be two together." So, from the moment you craft that artifact it's always in multiples of twos, all the way to the end when you ride it: you have to have the sled and the rider. Even the traditional lashing is in multiples of twos. If you lash it incorrectly it becomes rigid, like people are today. If you lash it properly, it flexes with every little mound that you go over and it won't break up. There's a hidden meaning behind all of these things. So *holua* is a very significant thing. It teaches people why it's important to carry on the actual traditional ways.

CB: Do you believe traditional surfing or *he'e holua* should be protected by an institution such

as UNESCO as intangible heritage?

TS: I don't think that we've ever thought that far ahead because we've been trying to keep ourselves alive culturally. Surfing has been so controlled by today's modern surf industry, by white people. In 2000 my wife Anne and I made it our mission to reeducate everyone on the importance of it all. There was a movement in the surf industry to fill their pockets with more dollars and take the origins of surfing out of Hawaii and put it in Africa, or in Peru, because they wanted to disconnect it from its culture and traditions. It is important that an organization like UNESCO come and help. I've travelled to the UK, Belgium, Africa, Indonesia, and New Zealand educating people. Rather than being angry, my mission has been to share the knowledge.

CB: Do you have someone who will continue your work when you're no longer here?

TS: Every one of my children and every one of my grandchildren. I see it in their eyes. ■

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Golf's Long History from China to Scotland

|| BY LIZ LEAFLOOR

Golf is a sport with ancient origins that has endured into our modern era, adapting and evolving through time to fit the age. Golf, in its modern incarnation, is understood as a ball and club sport wherein players hit small balls into holes from a distance, over various terrains and at a series of starting points. Aside from the risk of lightning strike or aggressive competitors, it is a sport in which – unlike other ancient games – death is somewhat unlikely, which might be one of the reasons it has lasted so long and is now enjoyed on greens around the world.



1st Golf International. Date: 1902

While it is often assumed that golf originated in Scotland, that is only part of the story. Historians still debate the true origins of the ball and club sport that descended from the ball and stick games of ancient eras around the globe.

Recorded ball and stick games stretch back to at least 2600 BC in Middle Egypt, with tombs displaying paintings and bas-reliefs showing men with clubs or sticks and balls. The name of these ancient Egyptian games remains unknown, but it is said they were probably exported to the Mediterranean through trade.

The ancient Greeks continued the stick-and-ball game traditions, and carvings depict a sport that appears to be similar to modern field hockey.

Researchers connect modern golf with the ancient Roman game of

Paganica (or *Paganicus*), wherein a wool or leather ball was stuffed with feathers and hit with bent wooden clubs. The Roman balls were bigger than the modern incarnation, approximately 5.5 inches in diameter. The object of *Paganica* was to strike the ball and hit an appointed target, a rock or tree.

As the Roman Empire spread across Europe in the first century, so too did their ball games, and the popular sport eventually reached the northern countries.

THE SCOTS ADD THE HOLE

Historians generally agree that the term “golf” came from the Middle Dutch words *colf* or *colve*, which were sticks or bats used in an early ball game, called *kolven*. It is said the Scots later added the element of the hole in the ground, and individual





1

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1 The more modern image of golf. The MacDonald boys with ball and club, 18th century.

2 Bas relief approx. 600 BC, Kera-meikos, Athens, shows men with hooked clubs or sticks playing with a ball.

players rather than teams, which forever separated golf from other ball and stick sports.

During the Middle Ages, the game of golf was banned by the Scottish kings James II and James IV in the 1400s, as it was believed the popularity of the sport interfered with military discipline and archery training. Other such games featuring curved sticks or clubs were also legislated, such as early field hockey (the stick was bent, and so descended the words 'hooky stick', or 'hockey'). Eventually, however, James IV grew to enjoy golf himself, and the popular game spread to England in the early 1500s, and it was considered a game for the ruling class. In 1503, the first record of golf clubs noted, "For golf clubbes and balles to the King that he playit with."

ANCIENT CHINESE CHUIWAN AND GOLDEN CLUBS

It is suggested that Egypt, the Mediterranean, and Europe may not have had the only golfing traditions. The ancient origins of golf may have stemmed directly from China. The ancient Chinese game of *chuiwan* was played between the eighth and 14th centuries. This can be seen in a 1368-scroll titled *The Autumn Banquet*. The scroll depicts a member of the Imperial Court holding and swinging what looks to be a golf club. A ball sits on the ground near him as he appears to be trying to sink it into a hole. Flags seem to denote targeted



2

Public Domain



A court painting depicting Xuande Emperor of the Ming Dynasty playing chuiwan.

areas. The rules of *chuiwan* are said to resemble those of modern golf, in that players use sets of up to 10 clubs, the balls were made of wood, and the holes are spread across a terrain with different degrees of difficulty - and there was even a tee-off area.

The earliest reference to this golf-like sport in China dates to the Song Dynasty (1050–1100) with a report of a Tang official teaching his daughter how to play a game wherein one digs holes into the ground and drives balls into them. As the game was played by the imperial courts, clubs were sometimes made of gold, and were decorated with precious gems. The game of chuiwan peaked during the Song Dynasty, and then declined, and eventually it became a game casually played by women and children. It has been posed by Chinese scholars that chuiwan

may have spread to Europe from China by traders and travelers during the Middle Ages. It is said another potential golf origin is the Persian game chaugan.

MODERN GOLF TEES OFF

In Europe, documentary evidence of the modern game of golf cites the earliest recorded game as played on March 2, 1672 at East Lothian, Scotland, as included in the Account Book of Sir John Foulis

of Ravelson. The passage notes that “golf was played on Musselburgh Links as early as March 2, 1672, although Mary, Queen of Scots, reputedly played here in 1567,” and this has been accepted by Guinness World

Records, making it officially the oldest golf course in the world.

It was almost 200 years later that the now-standard 18-hole golf course was created at St Andrews, Scotland, reduced from 22 holes, and it was not until October 17, 1860, that the world’s first

recorded golf tournament, ‘The Open Championship’, also known as ‘The Open’ or ‘The British Open’, was played in Ayrshire. The inaugural tournament was restricted to professionals and attracted a field of eight golfers who played three rounds of Prestwick's 12-hole course in a single day. The following year, it was opened to amateurs. There were no prizes back then for winning The Open, unlike today, where the purse is \$12.5 million, of which the winner takes home \$2.25 million and the runner up gets \$1.35 million.

Certainly, golf is a sport that is enjoyed today by professionals, celebrity athletes, and regular enthusiasts alike, and it is a rich game that sees no signs of slowing down. The familiar swing of the club and the strike of the ball is a tradition that humans have been happily repeating since ancient times.■



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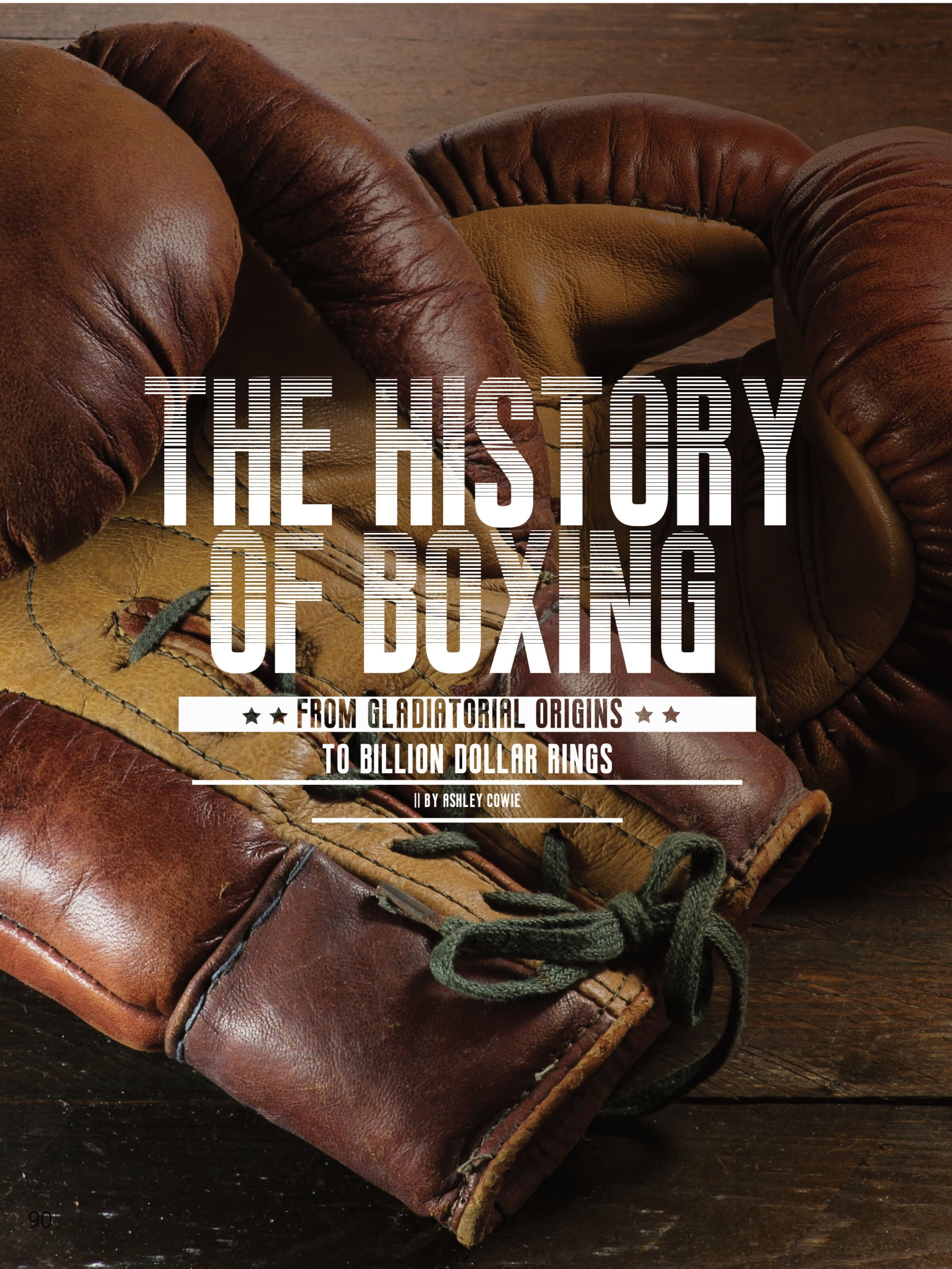
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THE HISTORY OF BOXING

★ ★ FROM GLADIATORIAL ORIGINS ★ ★
TO BILLION DOLLAR RINGS

|| BY ASHLEY COWIE

THE earliest recorded evidence of formal fist-fighting competitions was found on third millennium BC ancient Sumerian bas-reliefs of Assyria and Babylonia, and in Hittite art from Asia Minor. A 1350 BC relief sculpture of two boxers among spectators of Thebes, Egypt and Middle-Eastern depictions of bare-fisted fighters show ancient boxers, sometimes wearing bands supporting their wrists, but the earliest evidence of boxing with gloves is a Minoan fresco at Akrotiri, Thera (Santorini), dating to between 1500 -1400 BC. Boxing was first introduced to the Olympic Games in Greece at the 23rd Olympiad of 688 BC.

Legend holds that Theseus, king of Athens, invented a form of boxing in which two men sat facing each other and beating each other with their fists until one of them was killed. In ancient Greece, no weight categories existed, and boxers fought until one of the opponents either acknowledged defeat or was beaten so badly that he could not continue, or died. Long before the invention of boxing gloves, leather thongs were wound around the participants' hands and wrists. The boxers generally fought with a left leg stance, while holding the left arm semi-extended over it as a guard and for jabbing. The right arm was generally held back, cocked and ready to deliver that elusive knockout blow to the opponent's head.

Boxing found a firm foothold in Rome, where leather hand thongs were embedded with sharp metal studs to make the cestus, an ancient battle glove. This brought boxing out of the lowly realms of blood sports and turned it into a death match of



One of the earliest depictions of boxing gloves showing a pair of Minoan youths fighting. Akrotiri fresco circa 1500 BC.

the amphitheaters. Highly-trained slaves were sometimes pitted against one another in circles marked on the sand, giving rise to the term 'boxing ring.'

Archaeologists at Vindolanda Fort, Northumberland, exploring the ruins of the Roman site near Hadrian's wall, unearthed a pair of one-of-a-kind boxing gloves, still molded to the form of their former owner's knuckles. The boxing gloves date to approximately 120 AD and are a testament to sparring matches which probably took place among members of the garrison.

In 393 AD, at the height of the Roman gladiatorial period, boxing regularly resulted in competitors' jaws being knocked off and other such brutalities, so the sport was abolished in different regions across the Roman Empire.

'PRIZEFIGHTING' AND THE RULES OF BOXING

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, donning fist-mounted weapons became very popular again, especially in Italy between the 12th and 17th centuries. The sport resurfaced in London in the early 16th century, where bare-knuckle boxing became known as prizefighting. The first documented bare-knuckle fight in England was recorded in the *London Protestant Mercury* on January 6, 1681, when Christopher Monck, second Duke of Albemarle, "refereed a fight between his butler and his butcher," with the latter winning.

While the metal spikes of the Greek hand bindings had been removed in 17th-century England, the sport was much more primal than is the case today. For example, there were no written rules or weight divisions, no round time limits, nor referees. An article on boxing



Sicilian champion Entellus defeats the young Trojan Dares, Mosaic floor from a Gallo-Roman villa in Villelaure, France, ca. 175 AD.

published in Nottingham in 1713 by Sir Thomas Parkyns described the skills of "headbutting, punching, eye-gouging, chokes, and hard throws." The first recorded English prizefighting champion was James Figg in 1719.

The first official boxing rules, called 'the Broughton's rules,' were devised by prizefighter Jack Broughton in 1743 in an attempt to decrease the number of fatalities in the ring. A countdown of 30 seconds was awarded to downed fighters to give them an opportunity to recover, and grasping below the waist was

prohibited. Robert Rodriguez' *The Regulation of Boxing*, (2009) tells that 'The London Prize Ring Rules' eventually "outlawed; butting, gouging, scratching, kicking, hitting a man while down, holding the ropes, and using resin, stones or hard objects in the hands, and biting."

In 1867, the 'Marquess of Queensberry Rules' were prepared by John Chambers "for amateur championships held at Lillie Bridge in London." The 12 new rules distinguished bouts for Lightweights, Middleweights, and Heavyweights. They specified that fights should be "a fair stand-up boxing

Highly-trained slaves were sometimes pitted against one another in circles marked on the sand, giving rise to the term 'boxing ring.'

Thomas Molineaux
(1784 – August 4, 1818)
was a famous African-American
bareknuckle boxer and former
slave who won many fights
in Britain and Ireland.



Pub'd by Dighton, Spring Gardens, Jan. 1812.

MOLINEAUX.

match" and all fights must be conducted in a 24-foot-square ring with three-minute rounds and a one-minute rest interval in between each.

Prizefighting was outlawed in England and most of the United States in the 19th century, but similar to the Prohibition when alcohol was prohibited, covert prizefights were held in gambling joints, regularly raided by the police. A seminal court case in England, *R v. Coney* 1882, ruled that a bare-knuckle fight was actually "an assault occasioning actual bodily harm, despite the consent of the participants" and this brought about the end of public bare-knuckle contests.



"Thermae boxer", Greek artwork of the Hellenistic era, 3rd-2nd centuries BC, From the Thermae of Constantine.

The first boxing gloves resembled a bloated pair of mittens and were designed to block strikes, which changed the nature of the sport from being almost solely attack-focused to a more defensive game with dodging maneuvers such as "slipping, bobbing, countering and angling." Gloves also changed the shape of the sport, in that the classic forearms outwards with torso leaning backwards stance of the 19th-century bare-knuckle boxer, changed to a hunch-over pose. Over the following years it developed into the modern boxer's stance, where the torso leans forward with the hands much closer to the fighter's face.■

'Club Night (1907) by George Bellows / Public Domain



John Lawrence Sullivan (1858 - 1918) AKA; Boston Strong Boy, was the first heavyweight champion of gloved boxing from February 7, 1882 to 1892, and is generally recognized as the last heavyweight champion of bare-knuckle boxing under the London Prize Ring rules. Public Domain



Modern Boxing

The modern sport known as 'boxing' was born in 1892, when the first world heavyweight championship was fought under the Queensberry Rules, a match in which 'Gentleman Jim' Corbett defeated John Lawrence Sullivan at the Pelican Athletic Club in New Orleans. This fight raised the sport from essentially a badly organized riot of outlawed prizefighting in illegal back street venues run by gangsters, to the multibillion-dollar sport appreciated by millions of spectators today. The defining fight of this big money era was the 2015-Mayweather Vs Pacquiao event that earned Floyd Mayweather an estimated \$120 million and Manny Pacquiao around \$80 million.





Pyramids of Meroë, Sudan

In the barren landscape of Sudan, the pyramids of Meroë stand as the last remnants of the great Kingdom of Kush, one of the earliest known civilizations in the Nile region. By 300 BC Meroë was established as the capital of the Kingdom of Kush, and remained so until the middle of the fourth century AD, when it was invaded by the Kingdom of Aksum. The Kushites were in control of Egypt for about a century and one of the Egyptian practices they adopted was the building of pyramids. Unlike the pyramids of Giza, the Kushite pyramids are deserted and rarely visited, despite their recognition of great historical importance as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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Forensic Facial Reconstruction

Connecting with Our Ancestors

|| By Sarah P. Young

Facial reconstructions allow us to lock eyes with our ancient ancestors and relate to them in a way that skeletal remains do not inspire. It can be dehumanizing to look at a bare skull. Many societies even consider looking at bodily remains taboo. It can be easy to forget that a skeleton was once a living, breathing person when bones can provoke such a visceral response.

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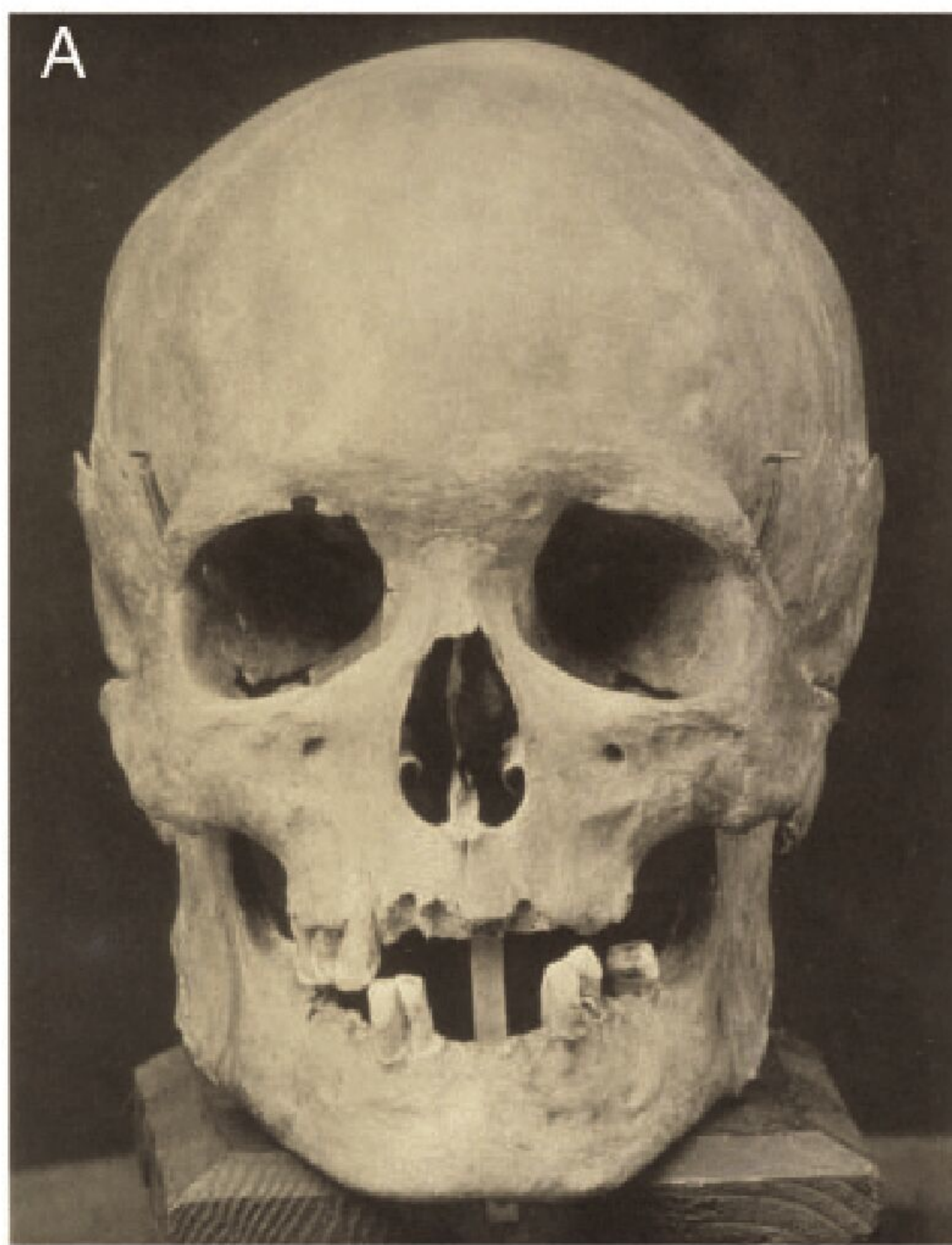
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Giving a face to the skeletal remains of a human who lived hundreds, or even thousands, of years ago makes it easier to connect with the past, and facial reconstructions can aid in sparking the interest of the general public. Advancements in technology mean it has never been easier to reconstruct faces from ancient remains, even though the discipline has been around for a surprisingly long time. In fact, the story of facial reconstruction is as fascinating as the history it helps bring to life.

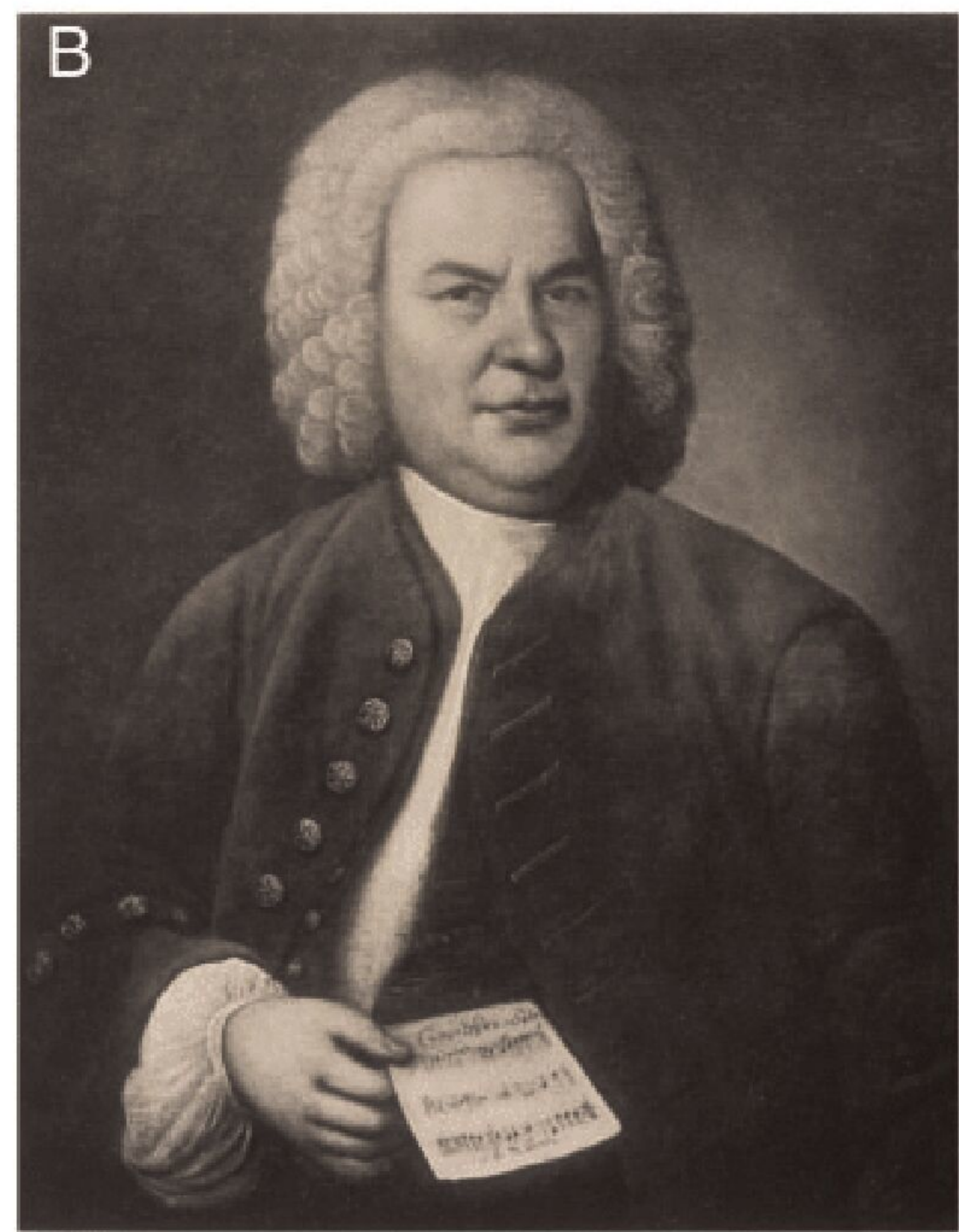
THE ORIGINS OF FACIAL RECONSTRUCTION

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries there was rapid development in the field of anatomy. In fact, the demand for bodies was so high that in Britain the Anatomy Act was passed in 1832 in an attempt to put an end to the resurrectionists and body snatchers who were taking advantage of the situation. It is thanks to the work of the anatomists that many of the principle techniques for facial reconstruction were possible. The German anatomist and archaeologist Friedrich Welcker played a particularly important role, as he studied cadavers to create a list of facial tissue depths.

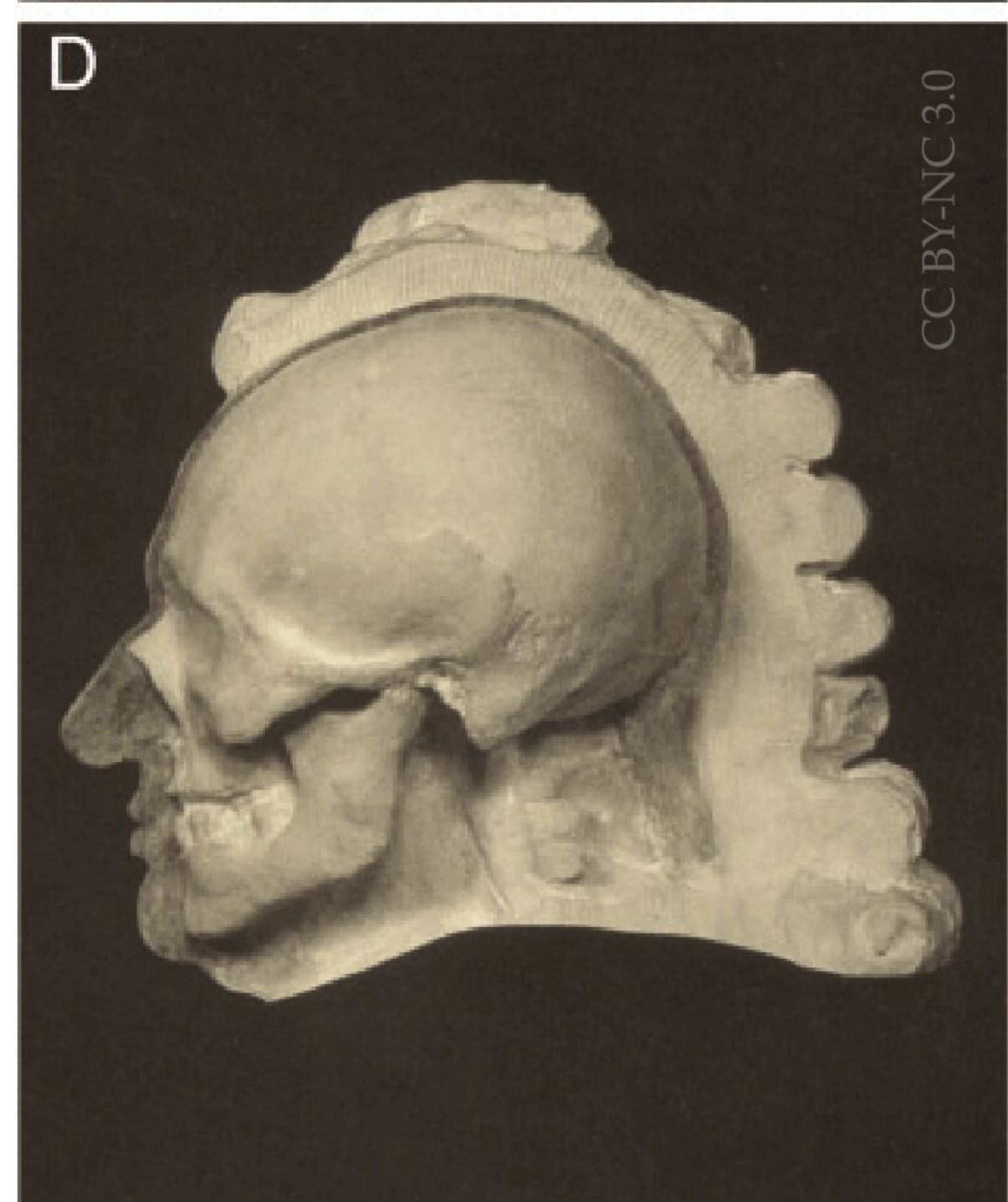
A fellow German anatomist, Wilhelm His, created the first facial reconstruction in 1895. He recreated the face of J. S. Bach using Welcker's data. The likeness of the reconstruction to contemporary portraits and busts of Bach was remarkable for the time and Welcker



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went on to produce several facial reconstructions of his own using what became known as the Welcker Facial Reconstruction Technique. The idea of facial reconstruction was immediately interesting to people in the fields of anthropology and archaeology. In 1898 Kollman and Buchly published a set of data for the thickness of facial tissue with more points of reference to allow for greater accuracy. This data was used to reconstruct faces for decades after its publication and it is still used by some forensic anthropologists today.

A DEVELOPING FIELD

The pioneering techniques laid down in the Victorian era were significant in sparking the science of facial reconstruction, but it was initially practiced more as a novelty

Wilhelm His and Carl Seffner identify a skull as Johann Sebastian Bach's by reconstructing his face. (A) The skull; (B) the oil painting of Bach in the St Thomas School, Leipzig; (C) the bust Seffner modelled on a cast; (D) the bust, in profile, with left half removed to show the relations of the soft parts to the bone. Photographs by Meisenbach, Riffarth & Co. from Wilhelm His, Johann Sebastian Bach, Leipzig, 1895.

Wilhelm His created his facial reconstruction of J. S. Bach in 1895.

than a science. Reconstructions of Bach and Kant were interesting and entertaining, but the earliest practitioners were not reconstructing the faces of people who were not already well documented. Bach, Haydn, Kant, and Schiller were of interest to the general public, but it seemed as though a peasant from the 1300s was not.

It was not until the 1940s that the technique was further refined and

started to become reliable in assisting modern forensic investigations. It is also at this point that some important elements that had previously been overlooked were brought into consideration. A 3D reconstruction became far more realistic when facial symmetry was considered and accounted for and data sets with information relating to race, age, and sex made the science far more precise.

ADDING MODERN TECHNIQUES INTO THE MIX

Facial reconstruction was a well established discipline by the modern era, but in the 1970s it was still thought of as a novelty by many anthropologists. By the 1980s, however, the field was becoming firmly rooted and respected within the academic sphere and researchers began to incorporate new techniques. These involved processes such as superimposing pictures of a missing person onto an unidentified skull to see if they matched.

One technique which became invaluable to archaeologists and forensic anthropologists was clay modeling, in which a reconstruction is built around a skull using data such as tissue depth and facial musculature mapped out with pegs which were physically attached to the skull. While this was first done in the 1940s, it was not until the 1980s and 90s that people began adding more detail such as fine lines and eyelashes to give the reconstruction a more lifelike appearance. Despite these details the clay models often look downright creepy - the combination of dull brown

clay and unsettlingly realistic eyes can be very off-putting.

Today, it is possible to scan a skull and work on a digital facial reconstruction. It is far quicker and easier to add digital pegs to a 3D skull than the time and effort taken on a physical model. Unlike their clay counterparts, digital reconstructions can be very realistic. It is also possible to update them as more information becomes available. There are also some realistic wax facial reconstructions, but the painstakingly detailed skin and hair on these models cannot be replaced in seconds if new DNA evidence becomes available.

With the advent of technology such as 3D printing and virtual reality, facial reconstructions are likely to evolve further. Archaeologists are already utilizing 3D printing to help reconstruct fragile skeletons, so it is only a matter of time before you will be able to print off 3D models or view VR reconstructions. This technology would give people the opportunity come face to face with the people of past from the comfort of your own home.

FACING THE FACTS: JUST HOW ACCURATE ARE FACIAL RECONSTRUCTIONS?

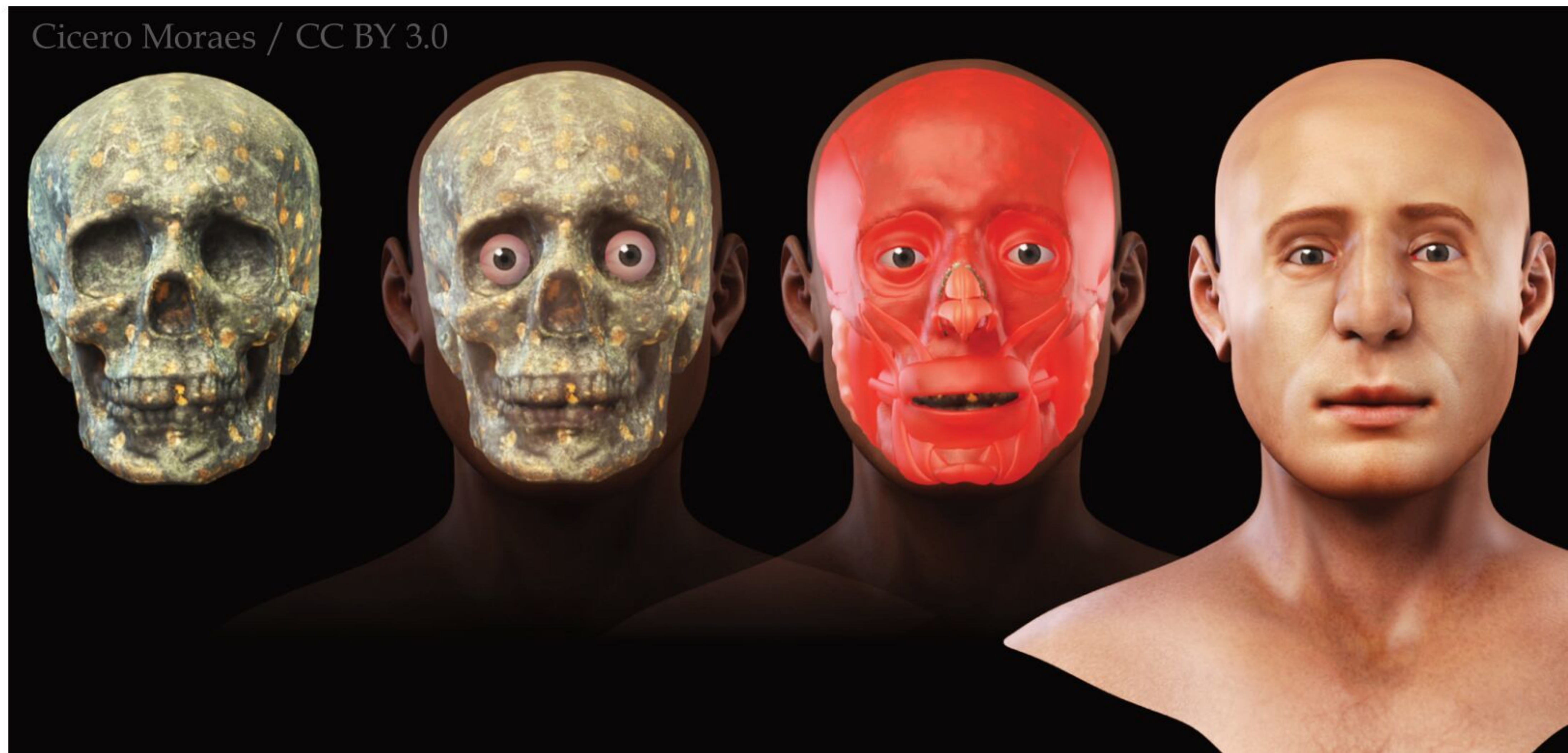
There have been a number of high-profile reconstructions of historical figures recently and it seems like whenever a reconstruction is shared there is controversy and argument about whether the person it portrays *really* looked like their facsimile. However contentious they can be, attempting to reconstruct the faces of our ancestors is a popular way of humanizing the past and engaging the general public.

Reconstructions have always been seen as valuable in the forensic field as a way of helping to identify John and Jane Doe's, but the technique has increased in popularity among archaeologists and historians thanks to shows like *Meet the Ancestors* and *History Cold Case*. From Tutankhamun to Lucy the *Australopithecus*, reconstructions help us to realize that the people we read about in books really existed and perhaps empathize more with the way they lived. But how confident can we be that we really are seeing the person as they were in real life?

It seems like whenever a reconstruction is shared there is controversy and argument about whether the person it portrays really looked like their facsimile.



Cicero Moraes / CC BY 3.0



Stages of 3D facial reconstruction.



Sculpture by Elisabeth Daynès in partnership with Travel Channel's "Expedition Unknown" and Josh Gates. Photo courtesy of Travel Channel.

RECENT CONTROVERSY: RECONSTRUCTIONS AS ART OR SCIENCE?

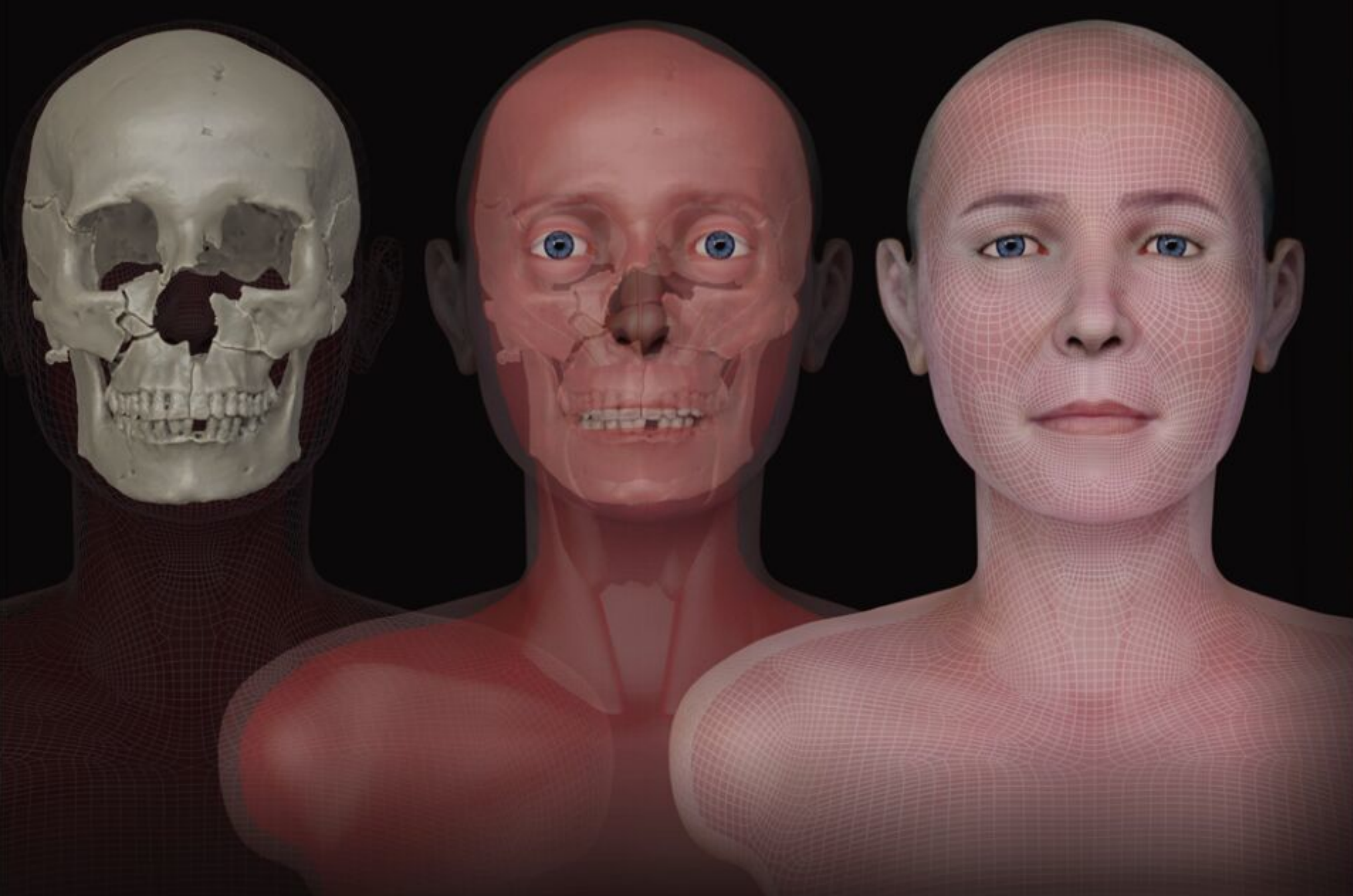
2018 brought us a number of controversial facial reconstructions. The University of Bristol's reconstruction of Egyptian queen Nefertiti was accused of whitewashing, while a reconstruction of the so called Cheddar Man from Somerset in England caused an outcry over the decision to give him very dark skin.

Meanwhile the reconstruction of a teenager nicknamed Avgi ("Dawn") who lived 9,000 years ago in ancient Greece, has been the subject of ridicule for different reasons. In this case people have criticized the sculptor for giving her such a stern expression (though she would probably have looked quite sternly at the people teasing her for looking masculine!)

Bringing people back to life through reconstructions takes a mix of art and science, but it is not always easy to determine which predominates in the various cases. Tackling the reconstruction of an anonymous woman like Avgi is very different to reconstructing a well documented figure such as Cleopatra, who was described in detail by her contemporaries and survives in images such as coins with her profile on them. Each of them presents their own challenges and needs for creative input.

There is an art to deciphering which elements of flattering portraits of Elizabeth I are accurate when the aim is to construct a realistic but

Cicero Moraes / CC BY-SA 4.0



The facial reconstruction of Queen Judith of Thuringia - a project organized by archaeologist Jiri Sindelar.

recognizable animatronic head of the monarch. But there is also an art in imagining what a fashionable hairstyle may have been for a young woman in the European Bronze Age. In both cases the image is built around the framework of facial features which are determined in a decidedly scientific way using osteometric data sets and precise measurements of the skull. Where pieces are missing, complex formulas are used to complete the skull so a reconstruction can be made.

Unfortunately for the forensic artists who dedicate themselves to reconstructing people from the near and distant past, it is a skill which is criticized for its inaccuracy by both scientists and artists alike. Scientists argue that reconstructions are too subjective and are reliant on the artistic talent of the person undertaking them – the best forensic anthropologists in the world may not be great artists. Criticism from artists is that the field is too reliant on data sets and averages and will only ever produce a likeness which is of a similar facial type rather than managing to capture a characteristic likeness.

RECENT ADVANCES IN THE SCIENCE OF FACIAL RECONSTRUCTION

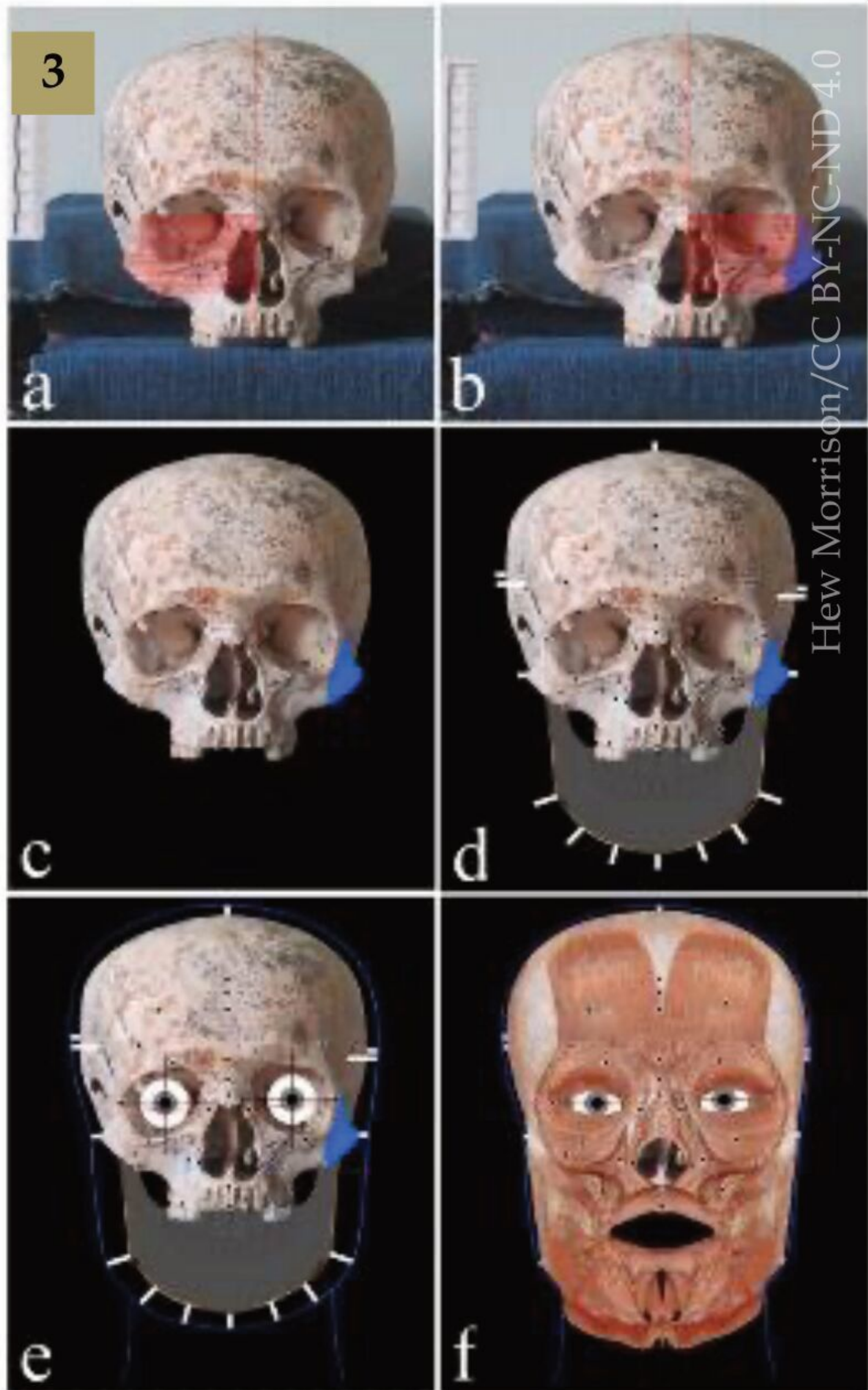
Digital reconstructions mean that it is now quick and easy to change things like hair style and eye color allowing a variety of possibilities to be presented and altered if research provides new evidence. The controversial decision to give the Cheddar Man dark skin was based on DNA evidence. Until recently it has not been possible to determine features this way and this breakthrough has taken away some of the inaccuracies and uncertainties from reproductions. Hair and eye



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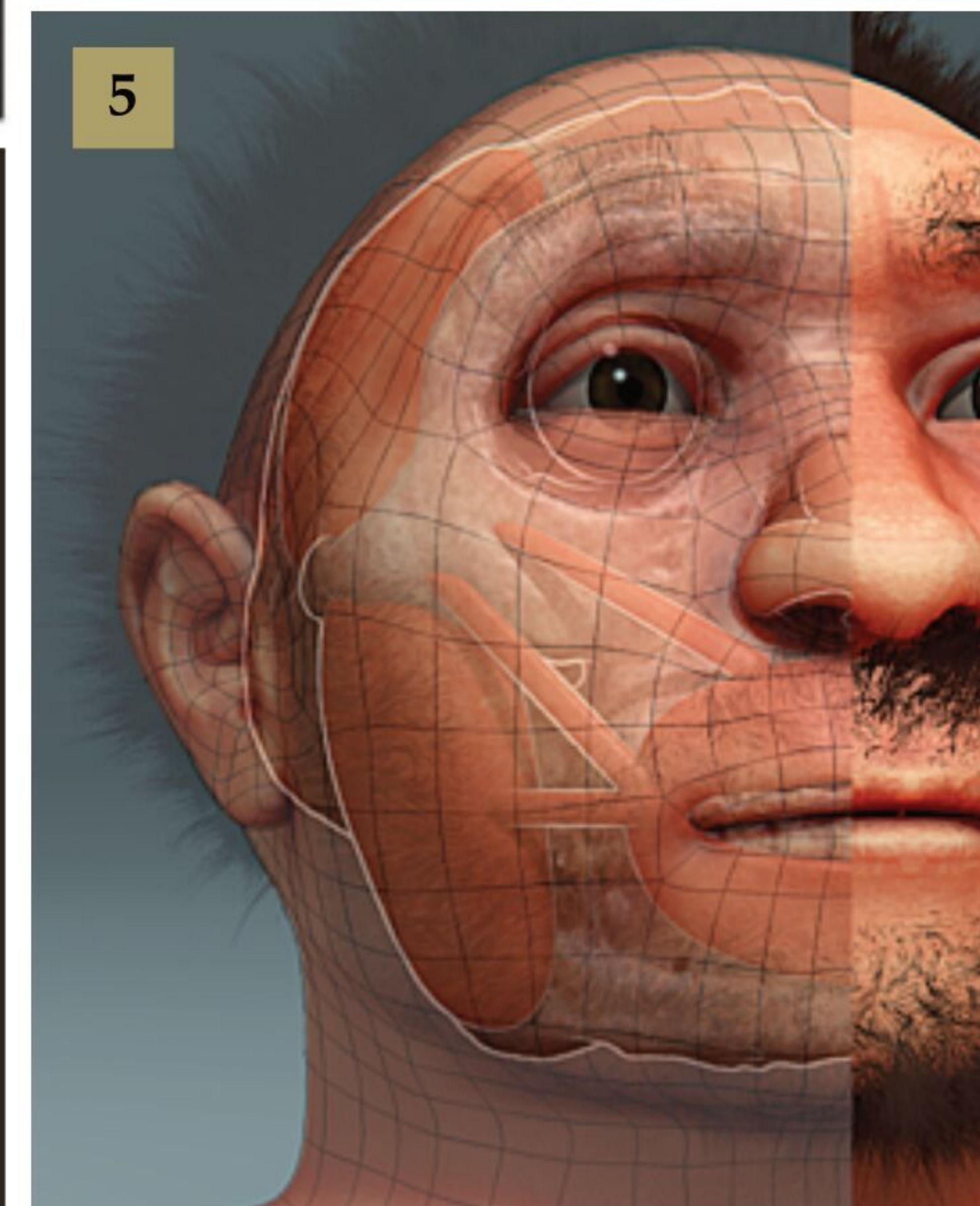


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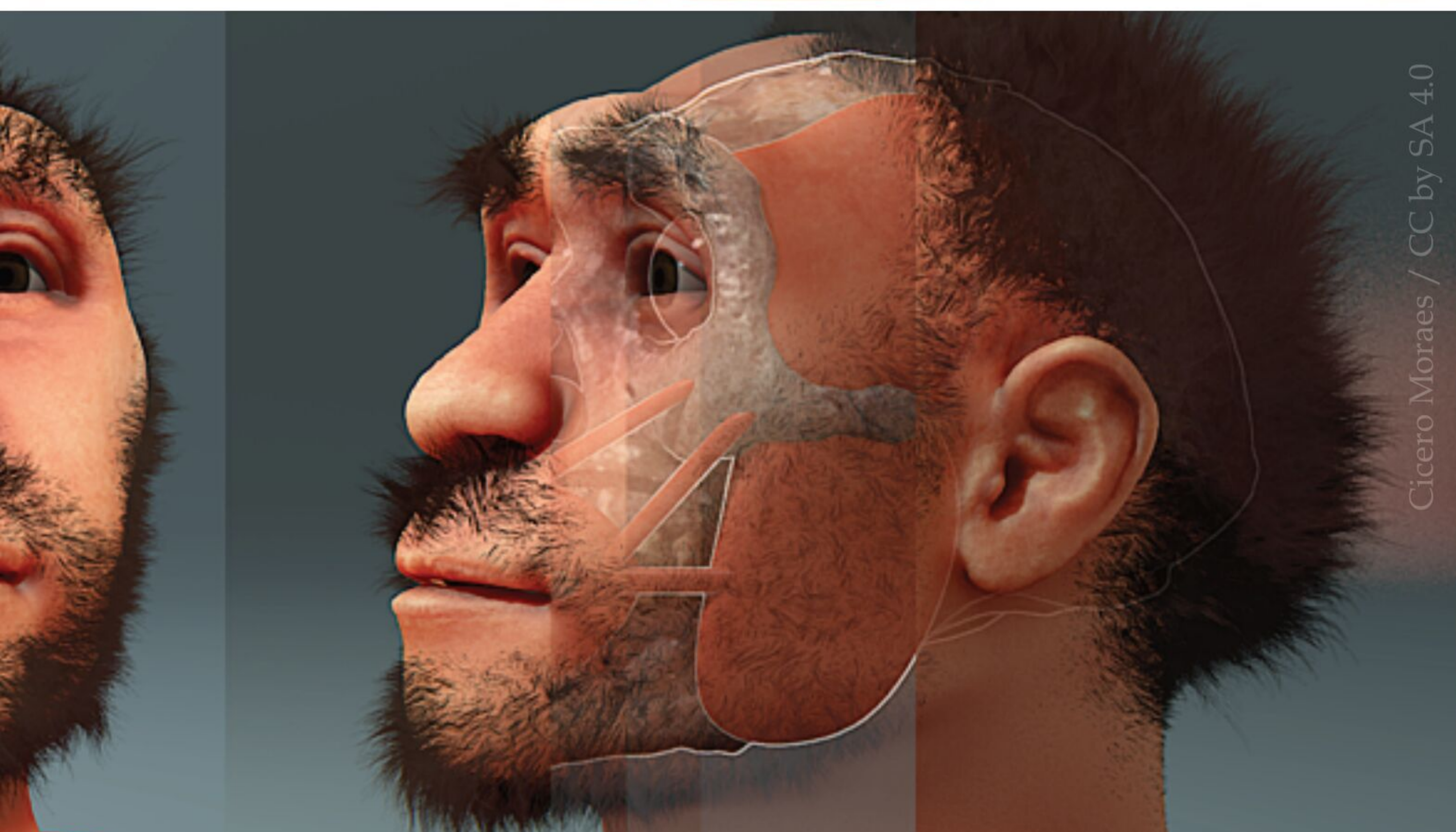




1. An anthropological reconstruction with clay of the face of Tzar Kaloyan, made by Prof. Yordan Yordanov on the basis of the skull.
2. Reconstruction of Myrtis, created thanks to DNA which can tell us hair and eye color.
3. New data allowed forensic artists to present an updated version of how a woman nicknamed Ava in the Scottish Highlands may have looked.
4. An artist recreating the face of a Medieval warrior.
5. Forensic facial reconstruction of Homo erectus.

color have traditionally been open to interpretation and the 2016 reconstruction of a Bronze Age woman nicknamed Ava was given wavy blonde hair and blue eyes by the artist. Thanks to DNA analysis the reproduction was updated in 2018 to reflect evidence she had straight black hair and brown eyes.

But DNA analysis is an expensive process and it is not always possible to analyze the bones of the person that is being reconstructed, so it is likely that artistic license will remain an aspect of forensic reconstructions for the foreseeable future. This will inevitably cause debate about accuracy. But reconstructions continue to inspire and help people connect with the past, so even with their faults they are a trend that is here to stay. ■



The Strigil: An Ancient Tool for Skin Health

The Romans are known for their hygiene and public baths, and they held the concept of cleanliness in high esteem. However, Roman ideas on how to keep their bodies clean were very different to our own. Soap, as we know it today, didn't come about until much later, with the creation of ancient soaps such as Aleppo soap in Syria or Castile soap in Spain. The Romans therefore completed their cleaning rituals using oils instead.

The Roman cleaning ritual often made use of a tool called a strigil. It was utilized by all levels of Roman society, particularly athletes, soldiers, and the more affluent. As a skin health tool, it was produced not only by the Romans, but by the Greeks and Etruscans before them as well. The strigil appears on vases dating as far back as the 6th century BC. In essence it's a curved, metal blade. On visiting baths, Romans would rub themselves with olive oil before heading into warm, hot, cold, steam and sauna-style rooms. A strigil was then used by slaves to scrape off excess oil, dirt, and sweat.

This strigil was discovered in Palestrina, Italy. It's of Etruscan origin and has been dated to 300 BC. The artifact is made of bronze and has an athlete on the handle, who also holds a strigil in her hand. She's standing on tiptoe and is shielding her eyes from the sun. The girl is

wearing a pair of shoes with laces, but nothing else. Her hair is wavy and twisted into a bun with three flowers adorning it.

Strigils were culturally important, and were often buried with their owners or included as offerings to the deceased. They were made of a variety of different kinds of metals, from unadorned bronze strigils used by bathhouses or members of the lower class to ornately decorated strigils made from expensive metals such as silver or tin.

Ancient Greek and Roman athletes sold containers of their sweaty

skin scrapings to their admirers, who believed they would gain the vitality of their favored athlete by using the oil on themselves. This sounds pretty disgusting to the modern mindset, but they may not have been far off

the mark. While science doesn't fully understand the workings of our skin microbiota, the living microorganisms on our skin, the idea of using the microbiome of a healthy individual may not be as crazy as it sounds.

We can learn lessons from this method of skin care. Some new products have even recycled the concept in the hope of bringing strigils back into use, claiming the use of modern teak and silver plated stainless steel strigils provide benefits as body exfoliators and for lymphatic drainage.

Bronze scraper (strigil), the handle is cast as an athlete who holds a strigil in her hand.

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WHAT DID ANCIENT OLYMPIC ATHLETES EAT?

Academy of Taste



Alicia is a researcher, editor, and writer with Ancient Origins.

She's a lifelong learner and has worked in education, tourism, and anthropology. Traveling throughout Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador, Alicia has increased her knowledge of Pre-Colombian sites as well as life in modern Andean cultures.

ALICIA MCDERMOTT

The best athletes are often seen as representations of perfect health, and this is especially true for the athletes of the Olympic Games. To achieve their sporting goals, they have to pay attention to their diets and ever since ancient times food has played an important part in the life of athletes. In fact, the first winner of the

stadion (a 200-yard sprint) at the first recorded Olympics in 776 BC was said to be a cook named Koroibos from Elis.

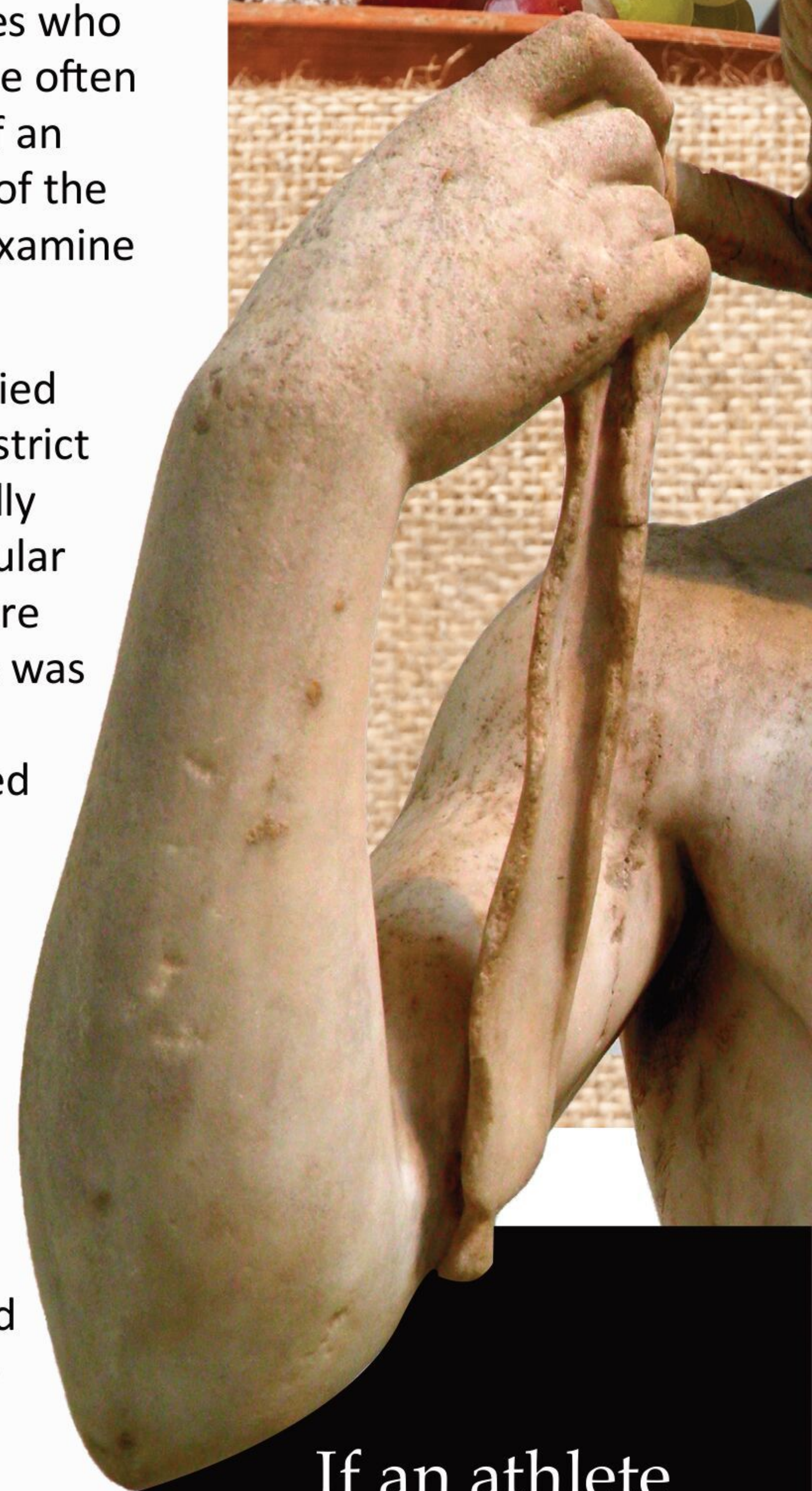
According to ancient authors, athletes initially shied away from cooked foods and focused their diets on dried figs, fresh cheese, and grains - especially barley. All of these items were believed to strengthen both the body and the spirit. Barley in particular was



seen as invigorating and athletes who chose to eat wheat instead were often criticized for their decadence. If an athlete performed poorly, one of the first areas their trainer would examine was their diet.

At first, athletes would have relied on their trainers to dictate the strict dietary guidelines, but eventually physicians became a more popular choice for diet design. With more people to provide advice, there was a change in what athletes were consuming. Soon diets expanded to include vegetables such as peas, beans, onions, radishes, squash, beets, and garlic, and more fruits - grapes, apples, pears and dates. Then fish and olives were added to some meal plans.

The next big change was the addition of meat - which gained popularity very quickly. But the choice of which meat to eat was made based on something you may not expect - the similarity of attributes between the animal and the sport the athlete performed. For example, eating goat was said to be beneficial for jumpers, and roosters that won cockfights were said to be better for wrestlers, beef, on the



If an athlete performed poorly, one of the first areas their trainer would examine was their diet.



other hand, was believed to make javelin and discus throwers as strong as an ox.

A legend which supported the idea of a meat heavy diet is the mythical strength of an athlete named Milo. Milo of Croton was a wrestler who won competitions at six different Olympics because he ate “20 pounds of meat and as many of bread, and he drank three pitchers of wine. And at Olympia he put a four-year-old bull on his shoulders and carried it around the stadium; after which, he cut it up and ate it all alone in a single day.” This story comes from Theodorus of Hierapolis’ *On Athletic Contests*, cited by Athenaeus in the ancient text *The Deipnosophists* (also known as *The Philosophers’ Banquet*).

While Milo’s story may be little more than legend, it does demonstrate the value of meat and athletes. Meat was usually reserved for sacrifices to the gods and not part of the daily diet. But at the first Olympic Games, an

altar was placed at the end of the race and the victor, Koroibos, lit the altar for a sacrifice then received the best pieces of the meat. This demonstrates that Olympic victors were the pride of their communities.

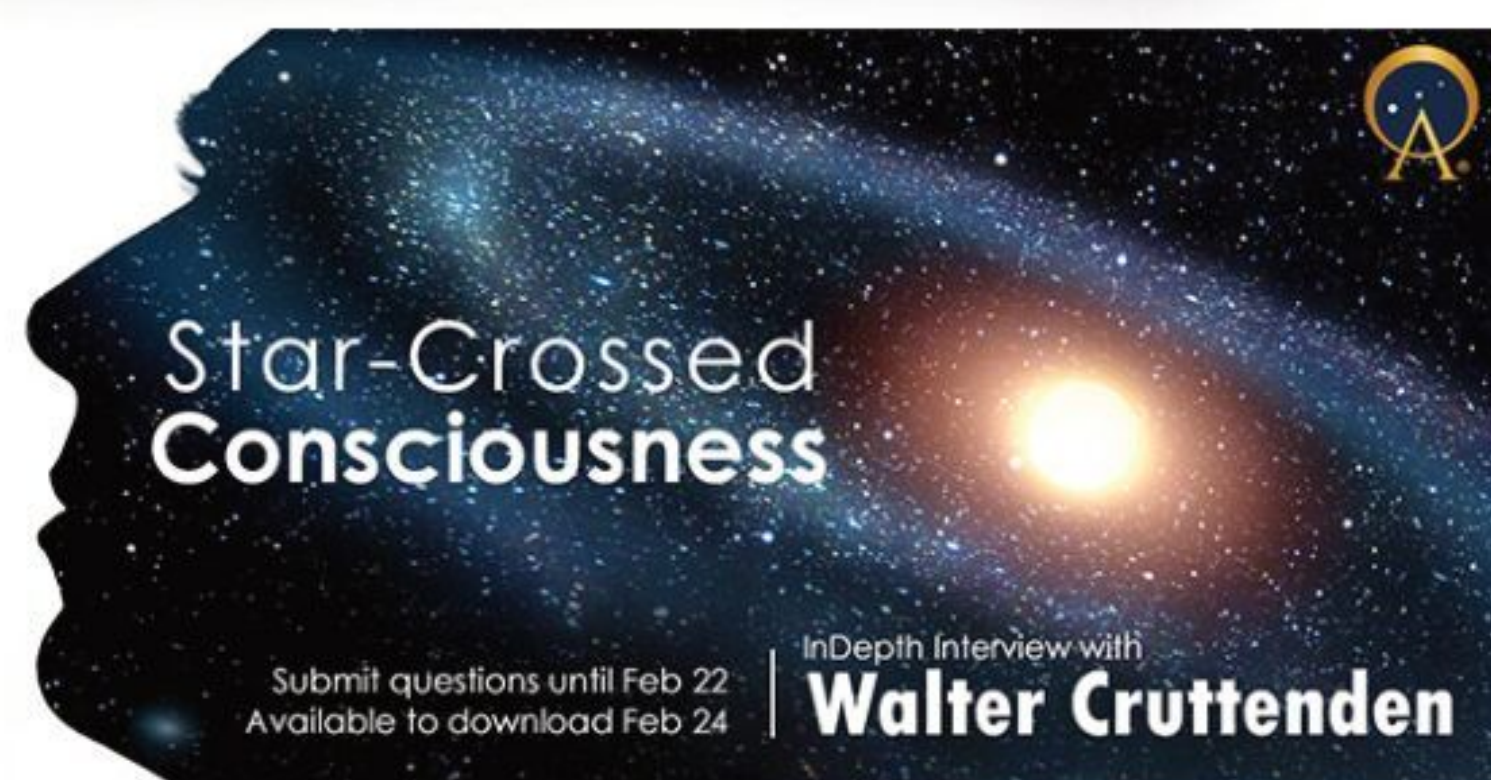
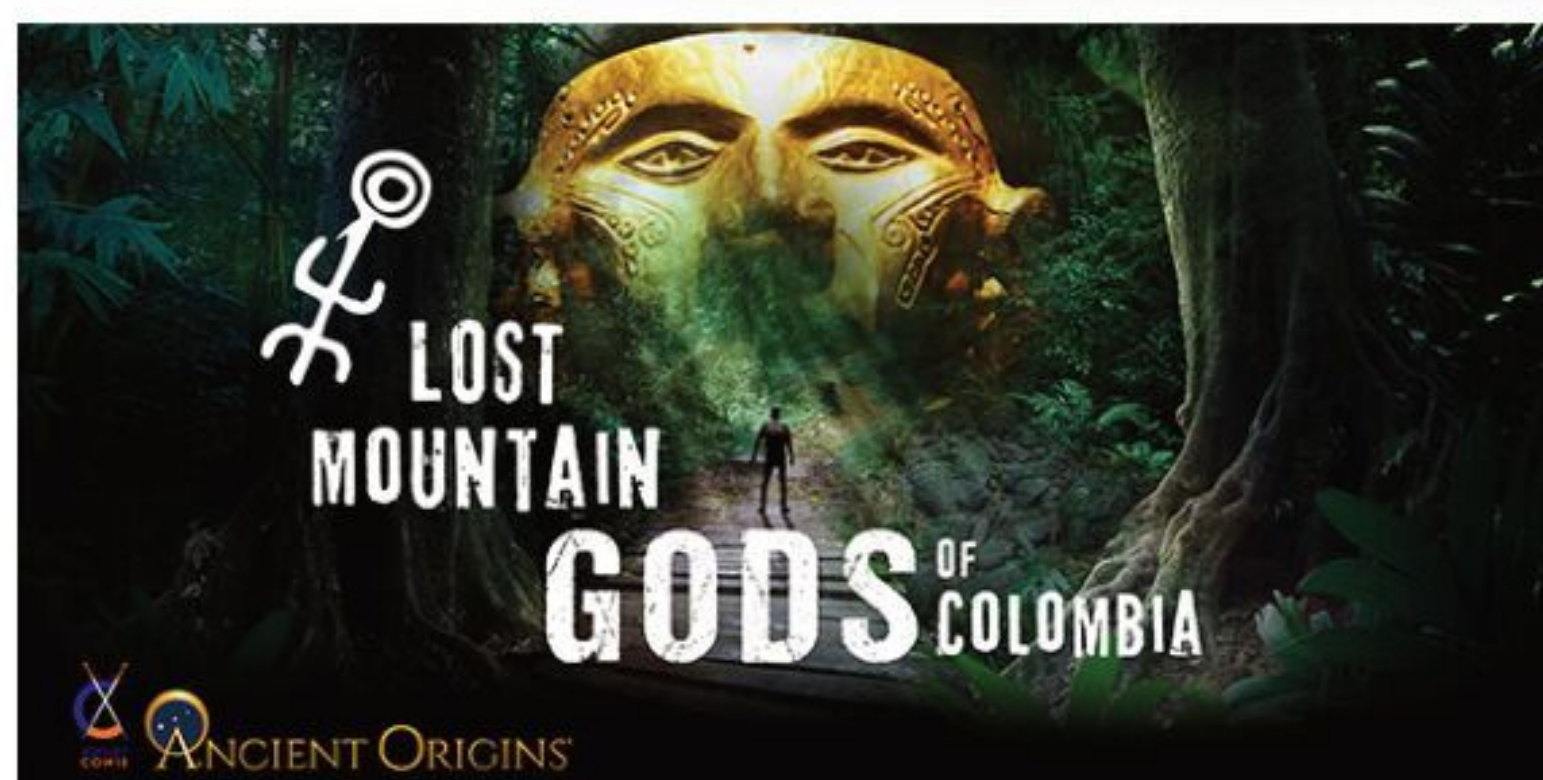
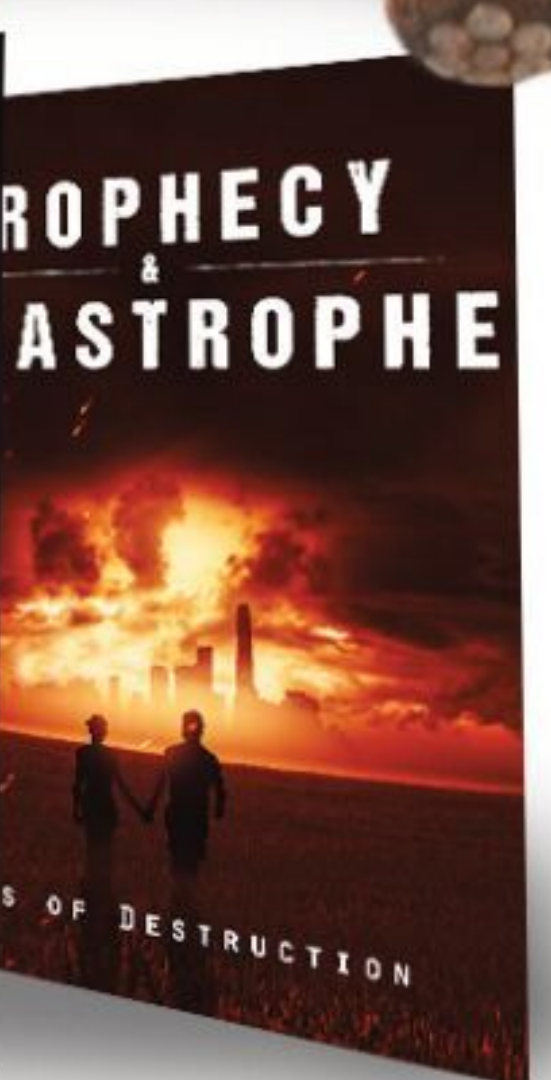
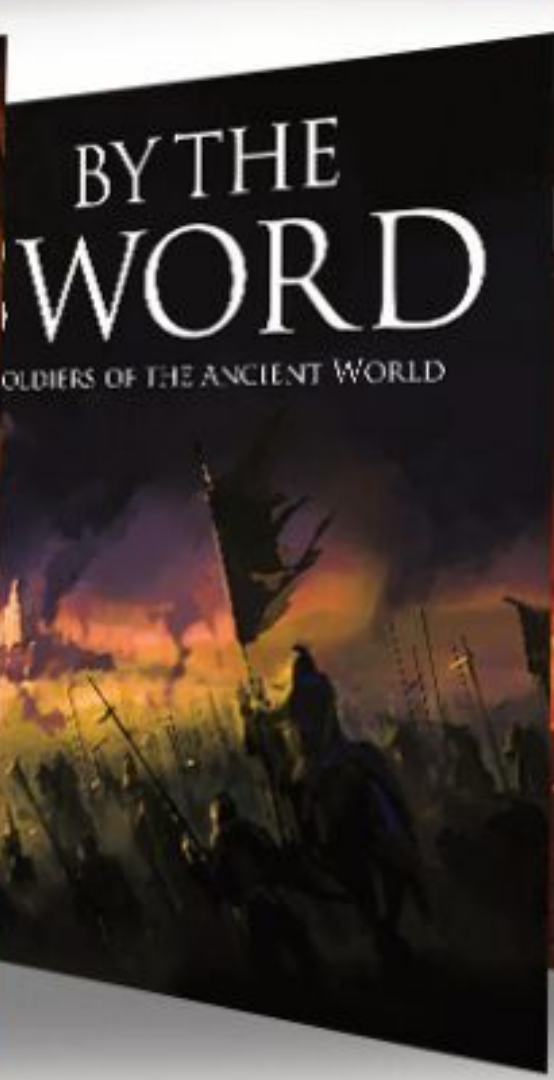
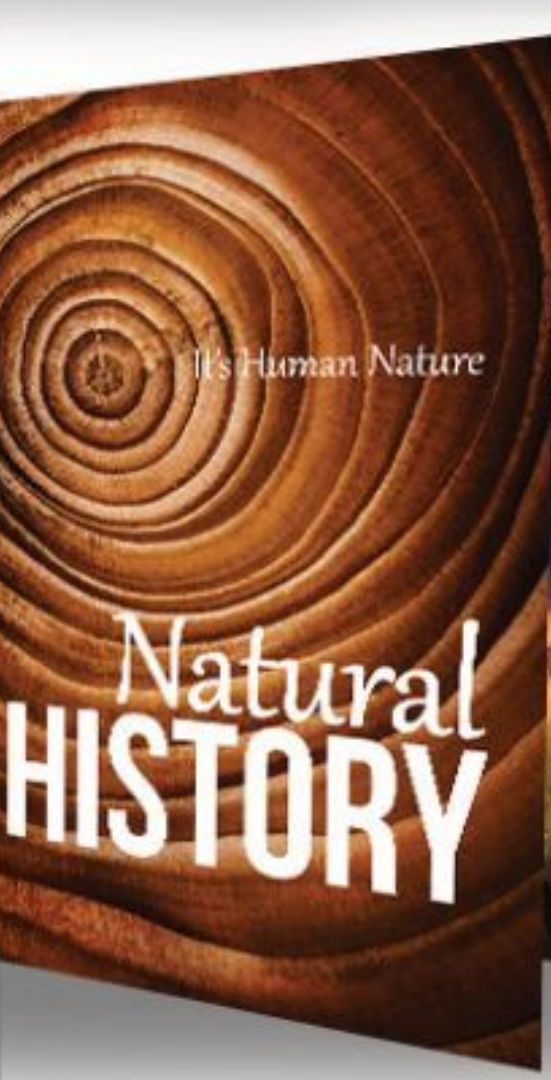
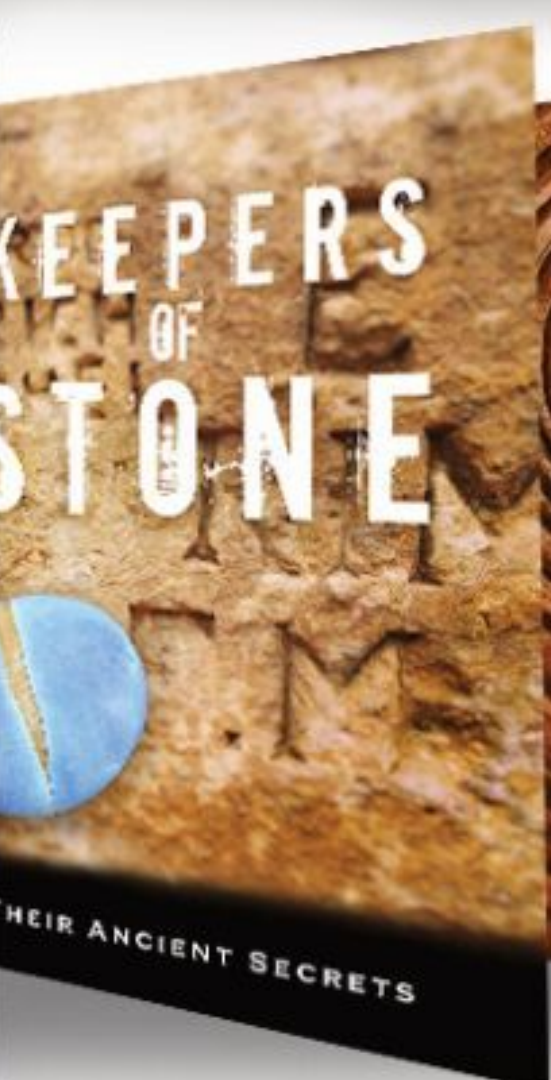
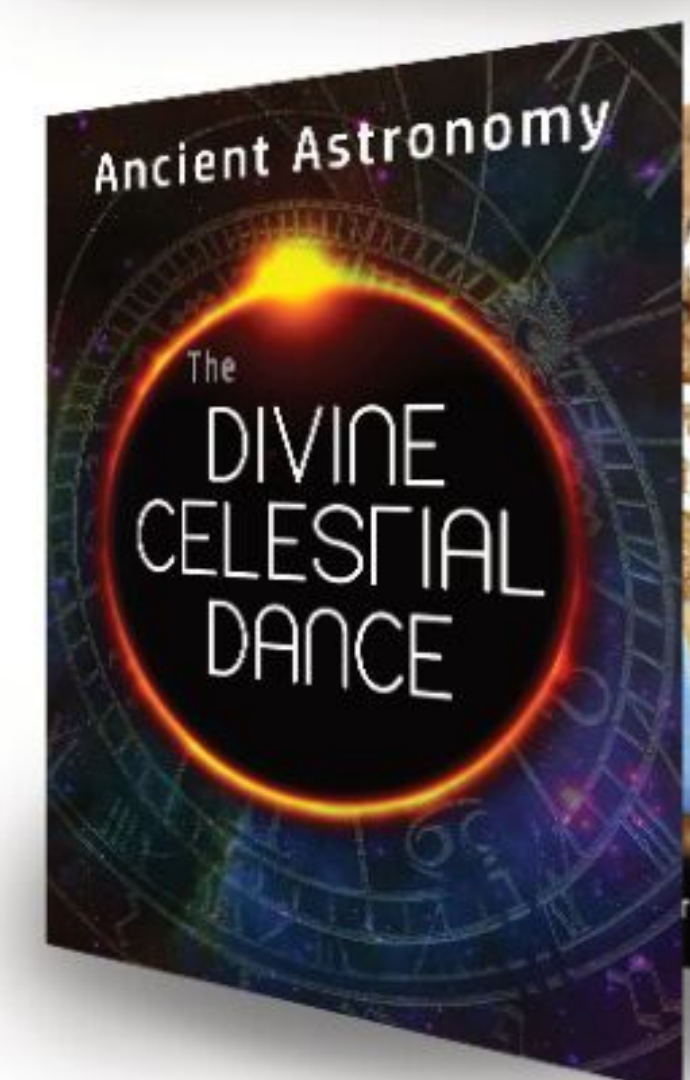
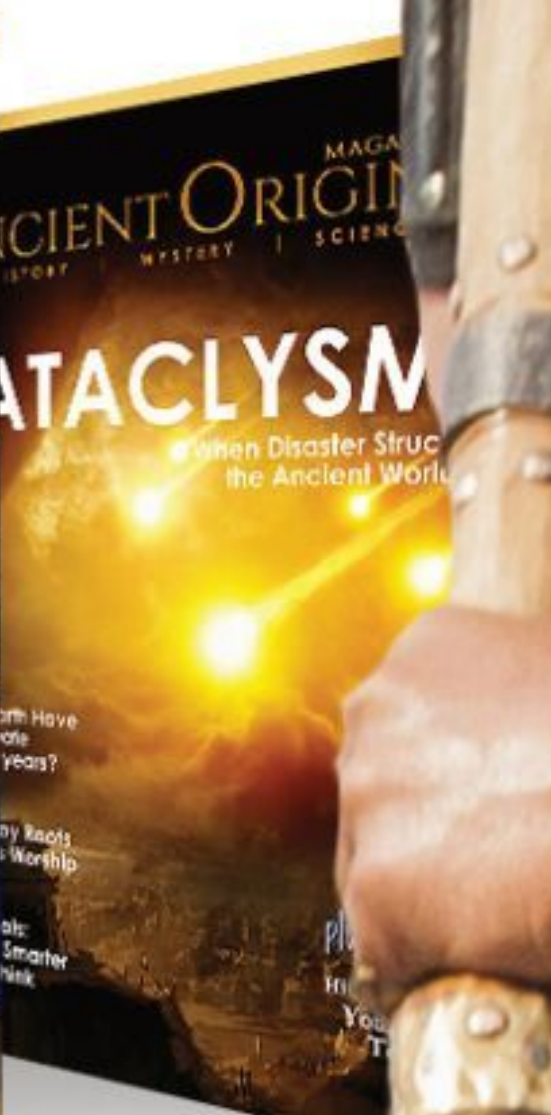
Since ancient Olympic athletes generally came from the upper class in Greece, they could afford protein-rich legumes and meats to build muscle. But there was great debate on the foods that were “good” or “bad,” and when different foods should be consumed. One diet tip suggested the avoidance of bread before a competition, replacing it with dried figs to build muscle and stamina.

Another interesting tip comes from Hippocrates, who suggested athletes with sore muscles should “Get drunk once or twice.” It also became common practice for athletes to eat large meals and to sleep many hours after their daily exercises.

But even though wine and big meals were encouraged by many, those same trainers and doctors implemented strict rules in some other areas, such as forbidding athletes from spending time in the sun or having sex – especially if they were on their way to a big competition such as the Olympic, Nemean, or Panathenaic Games.■

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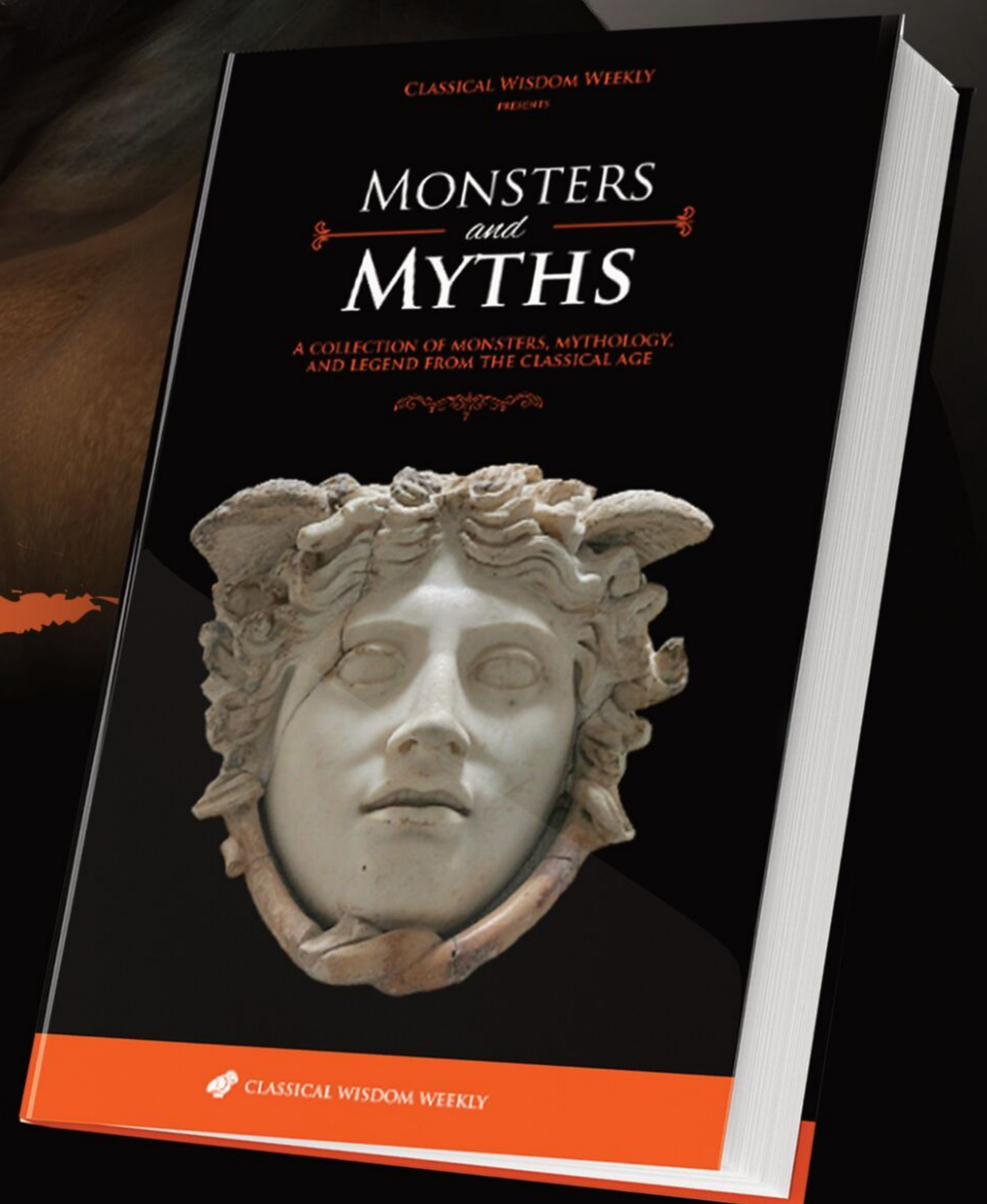


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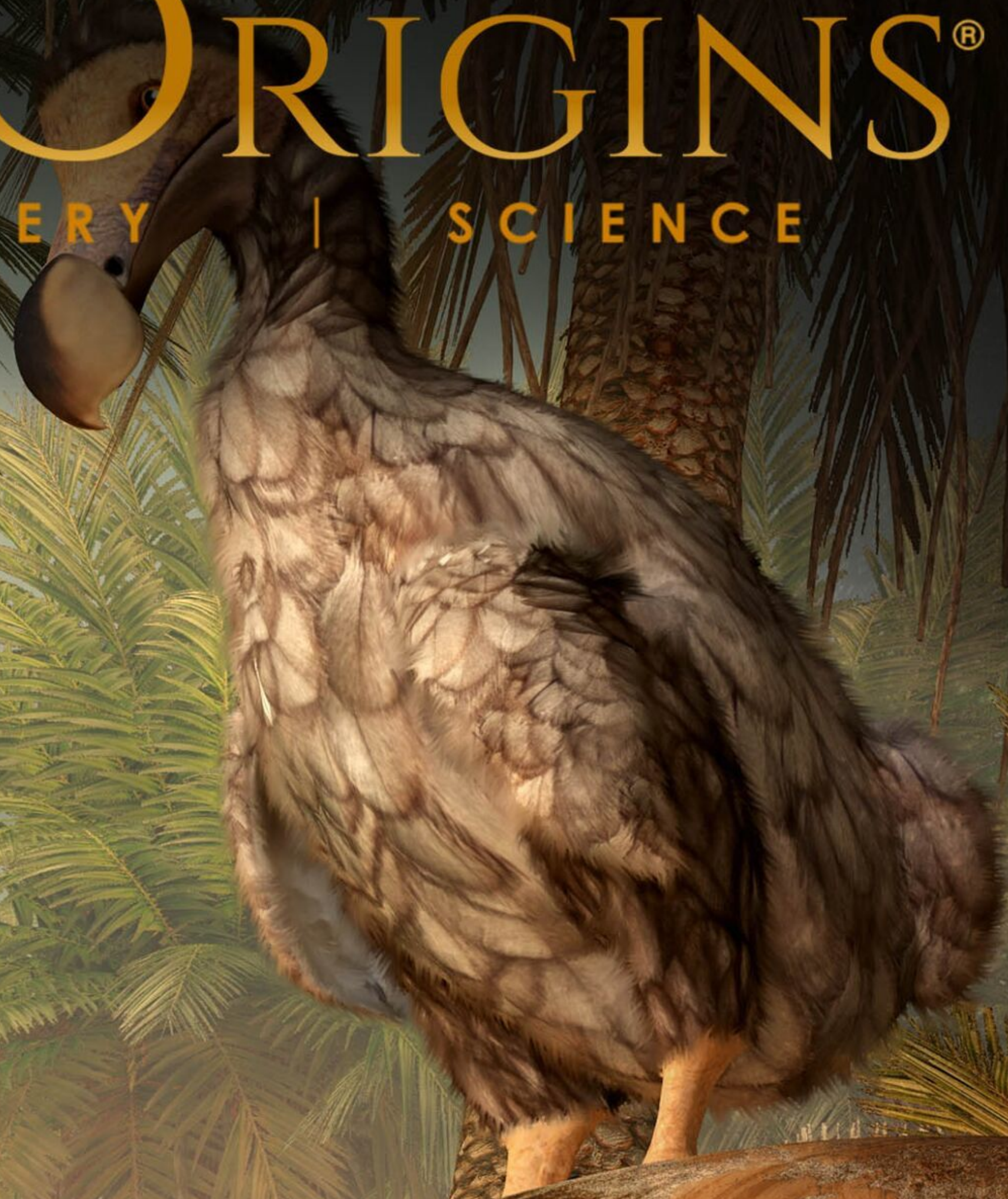
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